

Board Policy BCBI: Public Participation in Board Meetings

Status: DRAFT

Original Adopted Date: 04/01/2003 | **Last Revised Date:** 09-26-2024 | **Last Reviewed Date:** 09-26-24

The DeKalb County Board of Education encourages the public to be involved in public education. To facilitate public input, the Board will conduct a monthly Community Meeting in accordance with the procedures below. The Community Meeting is intended to allow speakers to address issues before the Board or other subjects pertinent to the Board or the DeKalb County School District.

Before addressing the Board, individuals are urged to seek a satisfactory solution to their concerns by following the proper staff and administrative channels.

Eligibility and Sign Up

- The opportunity to provide public comment is limited to District parents, students, residents, employees, businesses, organizations, entities and individuals who either reside or conduct business within the geographic boundaries of the District.
- Individuals wishing to speak may submit a request in writing to the Board Office via letter, fax, or e-mail. Such request shall include the individual's name, address, topic to be addressed, previous steps taken to resolve the concern, and the group (if any) that the individual is representing. If an individual is unable to attend the meeting after signing up in advance, the speaker may appoint a substitute speaker by calling the Board Office by noon of the meeting day.
- In addition, speakers may complete a Request to Comment card in person on the day of the meeting. Cards must be completely filled out, providing the information listed in the preceding paragraph.
- All speaker requests must be submitted by 5:45 p.m. on the day of the Community Meeting.
- An organization may sign up to speak by designating an authorized spokesperson and one alternate, who may speak only if the primary spokesperson is unable to attend.
- To allow the Board to receive input from as many stakeholders as possible, individuals who speak during a Community Meeting one month may only speak at the next month's meeting if there are spaces remaining after all non-repeating speakers have signed up.

To allow time for the Board's other business, the public comment period will be a maximum of one (1) hour or 20 speakers.

- Speakers have a maximum of {3} minutes each and must stop speaking promptly when their time is up.

- Speakers are encouraged to provide the Board with a written copy of their comments and other appropriate supporting documentation.
- The Community Meeting is designed to gain input from the public and not for immediate responses by the Board. While the Board cannot assure each speaker of a specific or individualized response, the Board will consider the public comments and any supporting materials provided by speakers.

Speaker Etiquette

- Speakers should be courteous and professional. Speakers may offer objective criticisms of school operations and programs, but the Board will not hear complaints about specific personnel or individuals connected with the District in a public session. Other channels provide a more appropriate forum for consideration and resolution of legitimate complaints involving individuals.
- Individuals will not be denied the opportunity to address the Board on the basis of their viewpoint. However, the Board will not allow abusive language, threats, comments, jeers, applause, or shouts from the floor. Disruptive persons will be asked to leave the meeting room. The presiding officer may terminate public comments that are profane, vulgar, defamatory, or disruptive.
- Speakers may not address confidential student or personnel matters, but may submit such concerns to the Superintendent in writing.

Special Circumstances

- At the Board's discretion, the comment period may be extended for a specified amount of time or a specific number of additional speakers.

Policy Reference Disclaimer:

These references are not intended to be part of the policy itself, nor do they indicate the basis or authority for the board to enact this policy. Instead, they are provided as additional resources for those interested in the subject matter of the policy.

Note: *To access the policy references, CLICK HERE: [State of Georgia Terms and Conditions](#) and close the LexisNexis tab, which will return you to the policy. Click on the links below to be taken to each specific code. **You should only have to do this one time per session.***

State

Description

O.C.G.A. 16-11-0034	<u>Preventing or disrupting a meeting of General Assembly or other meetings of members</u>
O.C.G.A. 16-11-0035	<u>Removal from campus or facility of unit of university system or school; failure to leave</u>
O.C.G.A. 20-02-0058	<u>Regular monthly meeting of local boards; adjournment; temporary presiding officer; notice of date; template for financial review; open meetings</u>
O.C.G.A. 50-14-0001	<u>Open Meetings Act; notice; minutes; telecommunication conferences</u>
Federal	Description
USC 1st Amendment	<u>First Amendment, U.S. Constitution</u>