

Board Policy BCBI: Public Participation in Board Meetings Status: ADOPTED

Original Adopted Date: 07/08/2003 | **Last Revised**

Date: 12/16/2024 | **Last Reviewed Date:** 12/16/2024 (DRAFT Revised: 11/17/2025)

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Meetings of the Board of Education are held to conduct the affairs and business of the school system. Although these meetings are not meetings of the public, the public is invited to attend all meetings and citizens are invited to address the Board on matters of public concern at all regular monthly meetings at the time shown on the agenda and in accordance with procedures established by the Board or the Superintendent. Public participation may be allowed at the discretion of the Board at certain additional meetings under procedures set by the Board. All members of the public attending any meeting of the Board must are required to follow the Rules of Conduct set forth in the procedures.

The Superintendent shall make available these procedures to allow citizens to address the Board at regular meetings in accordance with this policy. These procedures shall include a requirement that sign up for non-agenda related topics be at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting and sign-up for agenda related items be at least 15 minutes prior to the start time of the meeting.

All comments to the Board in accordance with this policy are to be brief and are intended for the Board to hear from citizens on matters of public concern but not to take action. Where the speaker seeks action of any kind by the Board or the School District, the speaker is referred to paragraph 8 below. This requirement can be waived by the Floyd County School Board Chairperson.

RULES OF CONDUCT AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCEDURES

These procedures are in accordance with Policy BCBI and provide the Rules of Conduct, in accordance with O.C.G.A. 20-2-58, for all Board meetings.

All attendees shall remember that while the meetings are open to the public, the purpose of the meeting is to conduct the business of the school system and members of the public are invited to participate only as allowed by Board policy and these procedures.

1. It is the request of the Board that in consideration of the students, staff, parents and other citizens attending, members of the public address their remarks to the Board of Education through the Board Chair. For the same reasons, the Board would request that speakers, members of the audience and board members be civil, avoid profanity and ~~not~~ use refrain from using abusive language.
2. Signs, flags, and banners are prohibited inside the Board meeting room.
3. Each member of the public participating in public comment will be given three (3) to five (5) minutes to speak on matters of public concern. The Board or its Chair may limit the total time allocated for public participation as well as further limit the length of individual comments during public participation at its discretion for the purpose of the efficient operation of the business of the meeting.
4. Only residents of the School District, representatives of businesses or organizations located in the District, parents or guardians of students attending the schools of the District or school system employees may address the Board during public participation. No individual or group will be retaliated against, in any manner whatsoever, for speaking during public participation.
5. The Board requests that multiple speakers from a group or organization appoint a single representative to address the Board.
6. Speakers may bring printed and other supporting materials. These materials should be given to the Superintendent or to the Board Chair in advance of any scheduled meeting, and the Superintendent or Board Chair will share or distribute said materials to the ~~and can be distributed to the~~ other board members before the meeting commences.
7. Speakers shall be limited to making comments or otherwise speaking to "matters of public concern," which simply means topics that affect the wider community or public interest—not just your own family's private issues. Some examples include school policies (like curriculum or discipline rules), how taxpayer money is spent,

teacher or administrator performance, or decisions impacting all students and families.

6-8.

7-9. Issues involving individual employees or individual students, pending or threatened and pending litigation are not subjects for public participation.

8-10. The public is urged to follow other resolution processes set forth in Board policies or available at individual schools, where those processes are clearly designed to address the issue to be raised. It should again be noted that public participation is not designed for this purpose and the Board will not take action based on public participation.

9-11. The use of physically threatening remarks, hateful racial epithets, sexually explicit language and other comments or conduct by speakers or members of the audience that result in a disruption of the meeting will not be allowed/tolerated.

10-12. The Board will not respond to comments made by the speaker during public participation unless a member of the Board chooses to ask a question. Speakers should remain at the microphone while answering questions and at all other times until the speaker's time is up.

By reading and acknowledging acceptance of these policies or rules of conduct prior to speaking during public participation, speakers attest that they understand and will abide by these rules and procedures. Those attending a meeting or speaking during public participation who violate these procedures in such a way as to cause a disruption of the meeting will be warned by the Chair. A continued violation may result in a speaker being asked to sit down. If any person attending a meeting and participating refuses to follow these rules, further disrupting the he/she meeting, they will be asked to leave the room and if they the speaker refuses, he/she shall be escorted from the meeting or Board room. Such serious or repeated violations of the rules of conduct may result in the individual being prohibited from speaking during a board meeting for an appropriate period of time as may be determined by the Superintendent or Board Chair. Any attendee violating the laws of the State while on School District property or while attending a meeting of the Board shall may be subject to arrest by law enforcement.