



Rules of Decorum for NHC Board of Education Meetings and Speaking at Call to the Audience or Public Participation Opportunities

Respectful Behavior

- Silence all cell phones during the meeting.
- Remain respectful and courteous to all in attendance (whether attendance is in-person or virtual). This includes NHC Board of Education members and NHCS staff.
- Refrain from using language that is lewd or obscene.
- Shouting, calling out, and/or making disruptive noises during the Board meeting is prohibited.
- Approaching the dais without invitation by anyone other than staff is prohibited.

Call to Audience Speeches

- Speaking time is determined based on the number of speakers who sign up at each regular meeting on a first-come, first-served basis.
 - Speakers must keep their remarks within the allotted timeframe.
 - Speakers who sign up for Call to Audience must be present and cannot yield their time to anyone else.
 - If a speaker's name is called but speaker is not present for the assigned timeslot, speaker will be placed at the bottom of the list and called again at the end of the list.
 - Speakers can offer comments or criticism directed at substantive ideas, actions, or procedures of the Board and individual Board members, but in the interest of maintaining civility and decorum, speakers are to refrain from personal attacks and insults directed at the Board, individual Board members, staff, or members of the general public.
- **Use of Signs at Board Meetings:**
 - Signs are permitted and can be used to accompany the speaker during their allotted Call to the Audience speaking time.
 - Those bringing signs in support of a speaker can stand with the speaker during the speaker's designated time as long as the person holding the sign does not block the center aisle. The sign holder may also stand at their seat and hold their sign.
 - Signs may not contain lewd or obscene wording or images.
 - After Call to the Audience is concluded, signs cannot be raised in obstruction of the view of members of the audience or as a disruption to Board proceedings.



These rules of decorum are not an exhaustive list and may be revised as needed. They apply to all official meetings that are conducted by the NHC Board of Education. All attendees at Board of Education meetings must abide by these rules of decorum. Disrupting or disturbing meetings and/or engaging in threatening behavior may result in consequences, including but not limited to, removal from board meetings and, in the case of threatening or severely disruptive behavior, being trespassed from NHC Board of Education property.

As a duly elected body, the New Hanover County Board of Education is governed under Chapter 115C of the North Carolina General Statutes, and the meetings of the board are conducted as official open meetings in accordance with New Hanover County School Board Policy 2300 (Board Meetings) and Policy 2310 (Public Participation at Board Meetings). Rules of decorum that are set by the New Hanover County Board of Education must be adhered to in order for board proceedings to be conducted in a timely, efficient, and respectful manner and to ensure the work of the district is completed without hindrance or delay. North Carolina General Statute § 143-318.17 provides that any person who willfully interrupts, disturbs, or disrupts an official meeting and who, upon being directed to leave the meeting by the presiding officer, willfully refuses to leave the meeting is guilty of a Class 2 misdemeanor.

References: [NC State Statute § 143-318.17. \(Disruptions of official meetings.\)](#); [NHCS Policy 2310 \(Public Participation at Board Meetings\)](#); [NHCS Board Policy 2300 \(Board Meetings\)](#)

Basic rules of respect are common knowledge.

Please use common sense and best judgement.