

1 **REGULATIONS FOR PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS WITH THE SCHOOL BOARD**

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3 Members of the community may present their views on issues of public concern which relate to
4 the operation of Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS), either by submitting written or electronic
5 comments to members of the Alexandria City School Board, or by addressing the Board during
6 the time periods designated for public comments at School Board meetings or during public
7 hearings. These opportunities for community input do not require Board Members-members or the
8 Division-Superintendent to discuss or respond to the speaker's views nor act on a request or
9 proposal.

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11 **I. Procedures for Written or Electronic Communications to the School Board**

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13 ~~The Alexandria City School Board welcomes communications from the community~~
14 ~~regarding matters of general importance to the operation of the school division.~~ Written
15 comments may be presented to the Board at any time by

- 16 • ~~M~~ailing or delivering thirteen copies of such material to:

17 Clerk of the Board
18 Alexandria City School Board
19 1340 Braddock Place, Suite 610
20 Alexandria, Virginia 22314

- 21 • ~~Or emailing such material to; or to:~~
22 boardclerk@acps.k12.va.us.

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24 Electronic communications may also be addressed to the entire Board at
25 board@acps.k12.va.us, or to individual School Board Members-members at their email
26 addresses listed on the ACPS website. ~~School Board website at www.acps.k12.va.us/board.~~

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30 **II. Procedures for Addressing the Alexandria City School Board during Public**
31 **Comment Time or Public Hearings**

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33 The purpose of School Board meetings is to allow the School Board to conduct public
34 business in an orderly and constructive manner. With the exception of certain public
35 hearings, the School Board is not required to provide public comment time, but does so in
36 order to receive the viewpoints of the community on general issues of public concern
37 related to the operation of the school division. The following rules are intended to
38 minimize or avoid disruption, confine speakers to topics related to the operation of the
39 school division, and to balance the School Board's informational needs with limited time
40 and available resources.

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44 **A. Advance Request Procedure**

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46 Members of the public who wish to address the Alexandria City School Board should

Commented [1]: Belief statement relocated to the policy.

Commented [MS2]: Does this create barriers for some individuals?

Commented [3]: Removed specific reference as URLs may change.

47 notify the Clerk of the Board ~~in writing or by electronic communications (703-619-8316~~
48 ~~or boardclerk@acps.k12.va.us)~~ ~~by 12:00 p.m. on the day before the~~ ~~prior to the~~ meeting
49 ~~date~~ to be placed on the list of speakers during the “Communications and Addresses to the
50 Board” agenda item. ~~The Clerk’s contact information is available on the ACPS website.~~
51 Only individuals who have signed up will be permitted to speak, unless otherwise requested
52 by the ~~C~~chair.
53

54 ~~Speakers addressing the Board in person may sign up to speak until the start of the meeting.~~
55 ~~Speakers addressing the Board remotely via video conference must sign up by 12:00 pm~~
56 ~~on the day before the meeting.]~~

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58 All speakers must provide the ~~c~~Clerk with their name, ~~and available contact information~~
59 ~~including~~ (email address, home address and phone number) in order to permit the ~~C~~Clerk
60 to contact them if necessary. ~~Speakers must also identify the issue of public concern about~~
61 ~~which they will be speaking.~~

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63 ~~Anyone who wishes to provide documentary support for the comments they intend to~~
64 ~~present at the School Board meeting should provide thirteen copies of such documents to~~
65 ~~the Clerk of the Board.]~~

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67 B. Number and Order of Speakers
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69 Speakers are placed on a list in the order in which they notify the ~~Clerk~~ clerk or at the
70 discretion of the ~~Chair~~ chair. Students are generally placed at the beginning of the
71 queue. If the number of speakers is too large to be reasonably accommodated, the
72 ~~Chair~~ chair may ask speakers to voluntarily combine their comments or submit them in
73 writing to the ~~School~~ Board. Speakers are limited to one presentation per meeting.
74

75 ~~The total time for public comments and public hearings and the time per speaker are~~
76 ~~determined by the c~~Chair, ~~and may be adjusted depending on how many individuals~~
77 ~~have signed up to speak at a particular meeting. While the School Board will do its best~~
78 ~~to accommodate all speakers who sign up, there is no guarantee that all such individuals~~
79 ~~will be able to speak at any given meeting.~~

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81 C. Public Comments on Agenda and Non-Agenda Items
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83 All individuals may speak at regular board meetings on agenda items or non-agenda
84 subjects which relate to the operation of the school division. Comments during public
85 hearings ~~shall~~ must be ~~confined to the subject of the hearing.~~ Public comments are
86 typically not accepted at worksessions.
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88 D. Addressing the ~~Alexandria City School~~ Board
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90 Recognition by the ~~Chair~~ chair is granted to one speaker at a time.
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92 Speakers addressing the Board in person stand at a centrally located microphone and

Commented [4]: The 12:00 noon the day before the meeting was inadvertently removed during the last revision. This paragraph is not necessary as the deadline is in the prior paragraph.

Commented [5]: Thank you! This ability to sign up in-person prior to the start of the meeting is difficult.

Commented [6R5]: Or I should say up to the start of the meeting.

Commented [7]: Throughout this policy and regulation, there are times when Chair is capitalized or not and I'm not sure it makes sense to me why some are changed and others not. The Chair (capitalized) to me refers to the person rather than the piece of furniture (lowercase). Can we keep those titles capitalized? Same with Clerk, Board Members, and Board?

Commented [MS8R7]: Superintendent and Board are always capitalized. Other than that its capitalized if it's the position title (Clerk of the Board) and not capitalized if used in a general term (the clerk records the name).

Commented [9]: Not every speaker may have all of these.

Commented [10]: This is inconsistent with the above paragraph which states that content can be sent via email.

Commented [11R10]: Should we consider what the 13 copies will be used for and do we really need the public to make copies? That could be a barrier for some community members.

Commented [12R10]: Seconded. Could they have an option to email it to the board?

Commented [13]: Consider allocating as specific cap and then giving the Chair the right to exceed the cap.

Commented [14R13]: How would it be determined who would get more time? Its and opportunity for bias to be visible.

Commented [15R13]: It is an...

lectern and precede their remarks with their name and the topic on which they will be speaking. Speakers addressing the Board remotely via video conference use the “hand raise” function and wait to be recognized by the ~~Chair~~chair. Once recognized, speakers will precede their remarks with their name and the topic on which they will be speaking.

Comments are addressed to the entire ~~School~~Board and not to individual Board ~~Members~~members, the Superintendent, or other members of the audience. Since cumulative comments tend to prevent other topics from being heard in a timely manner, speakers are encouraged to limit their comments when indicating support or opposition for a previously stated position. The ~~C~~chair may conclude comments from any speaker if the ~~C~~chair determines the comments are cumulative or are concerning inappropriate topics.

Speakers whether in person or via videoconference are considered visitors and must follow ACPS policy including Policy KK – School Visitors. As visitors, speakers, shall bear extended the courtesy of the ~~School~~Board and, in turn, speakers ~~shall~~must respect the privilege extended by the ~~School~~Board by not disrupting the orderly conduct of the Board meeting and are requested to model the attributes of high-quality civic discourse. Speakers must use ~~using~~ commonly —accepted rules of courtesy, respect, decorum, dignity, and good taste. The use of ~~obscenity, vulgarity, or patently offensive language shall be ruled out of order, as will words or statements which, from their usual construction and common~~ —acceptance, incite violence or breach of the peace. Speakers who repeatedly fail to comply with these standards of civic discourse may be required to provide their comments in writing in lieu of the opportunity to present in person or via videoconference.

~~School~~Board ~~M~~members listen to public comment and public hearing presentations, but do not comment, deliberate or take action on them. Speakers may follow-up with individual Board ~~m~~Members on the topic of their comments at a later date.

E. Time Limitations

Speakers are typically allocated three minutes each to deliver their remarks. However, in all instances, the allocation of time for speakers is at the ~~C~~chair’s discretion. The ~~C~~chair, with the assistance of the Clerk of the Board, ~~shall~~monitor and enforces the time limitation and in doing so may cut off speakers who have not concluded their remarks in a timely manner. A speaker who does not need the full time allotted may not yield unused time to another speaker.

All persons who have signed up and been approved to speak with the Clerk of the ~~School~~Board prior to the start of the meeting are permitted to speak during the ~~School~~Board meeting in the regular period designated for Communications and Addresses to the Board, subject to the limitations in Part B of this regulation.

F. Inappropriate Topics

Commented [16]: This provides the flexibility to combine speakers or set maximum time limits. As written you could get 500 speakers.

Commented [17R16]: approval process?

139 Public comment time and public hearings are intended to allow the community to
140 address the ~~School~~ Board regarding topics or subjects which relate to the operation of
141 the school division and are of public concern to the school community. ~~—For these~~
142 ~~reasons, and to ensure the privacy of individuals, Therefore,~~ during the period reserved
143 for public participation at meetings, the ~~School~~ Board does not allow public comments
144 or complaints regarding individual students, ~~individual~~ student disciplinary matters that
145 are the subject of due process ~~—~~ proceedings, matters involving pending employee
146 grievance proceedings or ~~—~~ administrative hearings, or matters involving pending
147 litigation.

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149 Established: September 24, 2009
150 Revised: December 4, 2014
151 Revised: April 6, 2017
152 Revised: March 22, 2018
153 Revised: May 9, 2019
154 Revised: October 21, 2021

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156 Legal Refs.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 22.1-78, 22.1-253.13:7.
157 2016 Op. Va. Att’y Gen. 15-020.
158 *Baca v. Moreno Valley Unified Sch. District*, 936 F. Supp. 719 (C.D. Cal. 1996).
159 *Leventhal v. Vista Unified School District*, 973 F. Supp. 951 (S.D. Cal. 1997).
160 *Bach v. School Board of the City of Virginia Beach*, 139 F. Supp. 2d. 738, 743
161 (E.D. Va. 2001).

162
163 Cross Refs.: BDDE Rules of Order
164 BDDH Public Participation at School Board Meetings
165 KK School Visitor
166 KL Public Complaints
167

Commented [18]: Does this prevent a parent from speaking about the experiences of their own child?

Commented [19R18]: Perhaps something about speaking about other children but not your own.

Commented [20]: I'm curious if these barrier prevent equity issues from being brought to the board, esp. regarding discipline or some of the bias we've seen demonstrated toward students with disabilities/mental health issues. Are they allowed to discuss once proceedings are over without identifiable information?