

1 **REGULATIONS FOR PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS WITH THE SCHOOL BOARD**
2

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 Board meetings or during public hearings.
7

8 **Written Comments**

9 Comments may be presented to the Board at any time by emailing such material to:
10 boardclerk@acps.k12.va.us. Comments may also be addressed to the entire Board at
11 board@acps.k12.va.us, or to individual Board Members at their email addresses listed on the
12 ACPS website. If comments are provided in a language other than English, they will be translated
13 by ACPS and provided to the Board.
14

15 **Public Comments at Board Meetings or Public Hearings**

16 The purpose of Board meetings is to allow the Board to conduct public business in an orderly and
17 constructive manner. With the exception of certain public hearings, the Board is not required to
18 provide public comment time but does so in order to receive the viewpoints of the community on
19 general issues of public concern related to the operation of the school division.
20

21 Individuals may speak at regular board meetings on agenda items or non-agenda subjects which
22 relate to the operation of the school division. Comments during public hearings must be confined
23 to the subject of the hearing. Public comments are typically not accepted at work sessions.
24

25 Generally, Board members do not respond to public comment during a meeting or hearing. If
26 follow-up is required due to the nature of the comments, the Chair of the Board (Chair) will work
27 with the Superintendent and School Board Clerk (Clerk) to respond accordingly following the
28 Board meeting.
29

30 The following rules are intended to minimize or avoid disruption, confine speakers to topics related
31 to the operation of the school division, and to balance the Board’s informational needs with limited
32 time and available resources.
33

34 **Advance Request Procedures**

35 Members of the public who wish to address the Board at a Board Meeting or Public Hearing may
36 sign up in one of two ways:

- 37 • Those wishing to address the Board virtually should notify the Clerk by 12:00 noon on the
38 day before the meeting. The clerk’s contact information is available on the ACPS website
39 and in the Contact Information section of this regulation.
- 40 • Those wishing to address the Board in person may notify the Clerk by 12:00 noon on the
41 day before the meeting or may sign up in person between 5:45 and 6:15 PM on the day of
42 the meeting. The in-person sign up will be in the Board room. A minimum of five speaking
43 slots will be reserved for in person sign up on the day of the meeting.
44

45 Only individuals who have signed up will be permitted to speak. The Chair may make exceptions
46 for individuals who have a valid reason for not being able to meet the established deadlines.

47 Requests for an exception should be provided to the Clerk.
48

49 All speakers must provide the Clerk with their name, available contact information including
50 (email address, home address and phone number), any required accommodations, and the agenda
51 item or other issue of public concern about which they will be speaking.
52

53 Speakers who require accommodations such as translation services are requested to notify the
54 Clerk 48 hours prior to the meeting so ACPS can arrange for a translator. Speakers may instead
55 bring a translator or provide the comments in writing. Comments provided in English will be read
56 by the Clerk of the Board or their designee during the public comment period. Comments provided
57 in a language other than English will be translated by ACPS and provided to the Board after the
58 meeting.
59

60 The Board encourages speakers to provide a written copy of their comments and supporting
61 documentation. Speakers may email such material to the Clerk at boardclerk@acps.k12.va.us. If
62 comments are provided in a language other than English, they will be translated by ACPS and
63 provided to the Board.
64

65 **Order of Speakers**

66 All persons who have signed up to speak with the Clerk according to the established deadlines,
67 and have been approved to speak, are permitted to speak during the Board meeting in the regular
68 period designated for Communications and Addresses to the Board, or during the public comment
69 portion of a public hearing.
70

71 Students are generally placed at the beginning of the speaker queue. Other speakers are placed on
72 a list in the order in which they notify the Clerk or at the discretion of the Chair.
73

74 While the Board will do its best to accommodate all speakers who sign up, there is no guarantee
75 that all such individuals will be able to speak at any given meeting. If the number of speakers is
76 too large to be reasonably accommodated, the Chair may ask speakers to voluntarily combine their
77 comments or submit them in writing to the School Board. Speakers are limited to one presentation
78 per meeting.
79

80 **Time Limitations**

81 The Board allocates up at one hour for speakers at regular board meetings. The overall time
82 allocation for Public Hearings is determined by the expected number of speakers and may be
83 adjusted to ensure all speakers who sign up have the opportunity to be heard by the Board.
84

85 Speakers are typically allocated three minutes each to deliver their remarks. Speakers requiring
86 accommodations including but not limited to, interpreters, speech & language difficulties, etc.
87 where an interpreter is needed, will be allocated additional time necessary to support the
88 accommodations. The Chair may adjust individual speaker time depending on how many
89 individuals have signed up to speak at a particular meeting.
90

91 The Chair, with the assistance of the Clerk of the Board, monitors and enforces the time limitation
92 and in doing so will promptly cut off speakers who have not concluded their remarks in the time

93 allotted. A speaker who does not need the full time allotted may not yield unused time to another
94 speaker.

95
96

97 **Addressing the School Board**

98 Recognition is granted to one speaker at a time.

99

100 Speakers addressing the Board in person stand at a centrally located microphone and lectern and
101 precede their remarks with their name and the topic on which they will be speaking. Speakers
102 addressing the Board remotely via video conference use the “hand raise” function and wait to be
103 recognized. Once recognized, speakers will precede their remarks with their name and the topic
104 on which they will be speaking.

105

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

112

113 **Decorum**

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

124

125 **Inappropriate Topics**

126 Public comment time at regular Board Meetings and public hearings are intended to allow the
127 community to address the Board regarding topics or subjects which relate to the operation of the
128 school division and are of public concern to the school community. For these reasons, and to ensure
129 the privacy of individuals, during the period reserved for public participation at meetings, the
130 Board does not allow public comments or complaints regarding individual students, individual
131 student disciplinary matters that are the subject of due process proceedings, matters involving
132 pending employee grievance proceedings or administrative hearings, or matters involving pending
133 litigation. After litigation, public comments on the situation may be shared, however student
134 information should still be confidential. These prohibitions are intended to protect student and staff
135 privacy, however parents may reference their own ACPS student but they may not reference any
136 student that is not under their own legal care.

137

138 **Contact Information**

139 Clerk of the Board
140 Alexandria City School Board
141 1340 Braddock Place, Suite 610
142 Alexandria, Virginia 22314
143 boardclerk@acps.k12.va.us

144
145 ACPS School Board
146 board@acps.k12.va.us

147
148 **Meeting Types**

149 The Board conducts its work through several types of meetings.

150
151 Meetings where public comment is taken:

- 152 • **Regular Board Meeting** – Meetings where the Board deliberates and makes decisions on
- 153 the operations of ACPS.
- 154 • **Public Hearings** – Meetings where the Board takes public comment on specific topics.

155
156 Meetings open to the public where public comment is not taken:

- 157 • **Work Sessions** – Meetings where the Board deliberates but does not make decisions on
- 158 the operations of ACPS.
- 159 • **Subcommittee Meetings** – Meetings of an appointed subset of Board members for the
- 160 purposes of developing recommendations for Board deliberation.

161
162 Meetings not open to the public:

- 163 • **Retreats** – Meetings where the Board participates in professional learning and
- 164 collaboration activities.
- 165 • **Closed Meetings** – Meetings where the Board deliberates and makes decisions on matters
- 166 that are protected under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act such as personnel actions
- 167 and contract related matters.

168
169 Established: September 24, 2009

170 Revised: December 4, 2014

171 Revised: April 6, 2017

172 Revised: March 22, 2018

173 Revised: May 9, 2019

174 Revised: October 21, 2021

175
176 Legal Refs.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 22.1-78, 22.1-253.13:7.

177 2016 Op. Va. Att’y Gen. 15-020.

178 *Baca v. Moreno Valley Unified Sch. District*, 936 F. Supp. 719 (C.D. Cal. 1996).

179 *Leventhal v. Vista Unified School District*, 973 F. Supp. 951 (S.D. Cal. 1997).

180 *Bach v. School Board of the City of Virginia Beach*, 139 F. Supp. 2d. 738, 743

181 (E.D. Va. 2001).

182
183 Cross Refs.: BDDE

Rules of Order

184 BDDH

Public Participation at School Board Meetings

185
186

KK
KL

School Visitor
Public Complaints

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

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4 the operation of Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS), either by submitting written or electronic
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8 **Written Comments**

9 Comments may be presented to the Board at any time by emailing such material to:
10 boardclerk@acps.k12.va.us. Comments may also be addressed to the entire Board at
11 board@acps.k12.va.us, or to individual Board Members at their email addresses listed on the
12 ACPS website. If comments are provided in a language other than English, they will be translated
13 by ACPS and provided to the Board.

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

14
15 **Public** ~~Members of the community may present their views on issues of public concern which~~
16 ~~relate to the operation of Alexandria City Public Schools, either by submitting written or electronic~~
17 ~~comments to members of the School Board, or by addressing the Board during the time periods~~
18 ~~designated for public comments at School Board meetings or during public hearings. These~~
19 ~~opportunities for community input do not require Board Members or the Division Superintendent~~
20 ~~to discuss or respond to the speaker's views nor act on a request or proposal.~~

21
22 **I. Procedures for Written or Electronic Communications to the School Board**

23
24 ~~The Alexandria City School Board welcomes communications from the community regarding~~
25 ~~matters of general importance to the operation of the school division. Written comments may be~~
26 ~~presented to the Board at any time by mailing or delivering thirteen copies of such material to:~~

Commented [2]: Belief statement relocated to the policy.

27
28 Clerk of the Board
29 Alexandria City School Board
30 1340 Braddock Place, Suite 610
31 Alexandria, Virginia 22314

32
33 ~~or to:~~
34 ~~boardclerk@acps.k12.va.us.~~

35
36 ~~Electronic communications may also be addressed to the entire Board at board@acps.k12.va.us,~~
37 ~~or to individual School Board Members at their email addresses listed on the School Board website~~
38 ~~at www.acps.k12.va.us/board.~~

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

39
40 **H. Procedures for Addressing the Alexandria City School Board during Public Comment**
41 **Time** Comments at Board Meetings or Public Hearings

42
43 ~~The purpose of School Board meetings is to allow the School Board to conduct public business in~~
44 ~~an orderly and constructive manner. With the exception of certain public hearings, the School~~
45 ~~Board is not required to provide public comment time, but does so in order to receive the~~
46 ~~viewpoints of the community on general issues of public concern related to the operation of the~~

47 ~~school division.~~

48 ~~The purpose of Board meetings is to allow the Board to conduct public business in an orderly and~~
49 ~~constructive manner. With the exception of certain public hearings, the Board is not required to~~
50 ~~provide public comment time but does so in order to receive the viewpoints of the community on~~
51 ~~general issues of public concern related to the operation of the school division.~~

52
53 ~~Individuals may speak at regular board meetings on agenda items or non-agenda subjects which~~
54 ~~relate to the operation of the school division. Comments during public hearings must be confined~~
55 ~~to the subject of the hearing. Public comments are typically not accepted at work sessions.~~

Commented [MS4]: Revised to improve clarity on when public comments are accepted.

56 ~~The following rules are intended to minimize or avoid disruption, confine speakers to topics~~
57 ~~related to the operation of the school division, and to balance the School Board's informational~~
58 ~~needs with limited time and available resources.~~

59 ~~Generally, Board members do not respond to public comment during a meeting or hearing. If~~
60 ~~follow-up is required due to the nature of the comments, the Chair of the Board (Chair) will work~~
61 ~~with the Superintendent and School Board Clerk (Clerk) to respond accordingly following the~~
62 ~~Board meeting.~~

63
64 ~~The following rules are intended to minimize or avoid disruption, confine speakers to topics related~~
65 ~~to the operation of the school division, and to balance the Board's informational needs with limited~~
66 ~~time and available resources.~~

70
71 **A. — Advance Request Procedures**

72
73 ~~Members of the public who wish to address the Alexandria City School Board at a Board Meeting~~
74 ~~or Public Hearing may sign up in one of two ways:~~

- 75 • ~~Those wishing to address the Board virtually should notify the Clerk of the Board in~~
76 ~~writing or by electronic communications (703-619-8316 or boardclerk@acps.k12.va.us)~~
77 ~~by 12:00 noon, on the day before the prior to the meeting, date to be placed on the list of~~
78 ~~speakers during the "Communications and Addresses to the Board" agenda item. The~~
79 ~~Clerk's contact information is available on the ACPS website and in the Contact~~
80 ~~Information section of this regulation.~~
- 81 • ~~Those wishing to address the Board in person may notify the Clerk by 12:00 noon on the~~
82 ~~day before the meeting or may sign up in person between 5:45 and 6:15 PM on the day of~~
83 ~~the meeting. The in-person sign up will be in the Board room. A minimum of five speaking~~
84 ~~slots will be reserved for in person sign up on the day of the meeting.~~

85
86 ~~Only individuals who have signed up will be permitted to speak. The Chair may make exceptions~~
87 ~~for individuals who have a valid reason for not being able to meet the established deadlines.~~
88 ~~Requests for an exception should be provided to the Clerk, unless otherwise requested by the~~
89 ~~Chair.~~

90
91 ~~Speakers addressing the Board in person may sign up to speak until the start of the meeting.~~
92 ~~Speakers addressing the Board remotely via video conference must sign up by 12:00 pm on the~~

93 ~~day before the meeting.~~

94
95 All speakers must provide the ~~C~~Clerk with their name, available contact information including
96 (email address, home address and phone number), any required accommodations, and -in order to
97 permit the Clerk to contact them if necessary. Speakers must also identify the agenda item or
98 other issue of public concern about which they will be speaking.

99
100 Speakers who require accommodations such as translation services are requested to notify the
101 Clerk 48 hours prior to the meeting so ACPS can arrange for a translator. Speakers may instead
102 bring a translator or provide the comments in writing. Comments provided in English will be read
103 by the Clerk of the Board or their designee during the public comment period. Comments provided
104 in a language other than English will be translated by ACPS and provided to the Board after the
105 meeting.

Commented [MS5]: Added to clarify process around accommodations

106
107 The Board encourages speakers to provide a written copy of their comments and supporting
108 documentation. Anyone who wishes to provide documentary support for the comments they intend
109 to present at the School Board meeting Speakers may should provide thirteen copies of such
110 documents to the Clerk of the Board email such material to the Clerk at boardclerk@acps.k12.va.us.
111 If comments are provided in a language other than English, they will be translated by ACPS and
112 provided to the Board.

113
114 **B. ~~Number and~~ Order of Speakers**

115
116 All persons who have signed up to speak with the Clerk according to the established deadlines,
117 and have been approved to speak, are permitted to speak during the Board meeting in the regular
118 period designated for Communications and Addresses to the Board, or during the public comment
119 portion of a public hearing.

Commented [6]: This provides the flexibility to combine speakers or set maximum time limits. As written you could get 500 speakers.

Commented [7R6]: approval process?

120
121 Students are generally placed at the beginning of the speaker queue. Other s—Speakers are placed
122 on a list in the order in which they notify the Clerk or at the discretion of the Chair. ~~Students are~~
123 generally placed at the beginning of the queue.

124
125 While the Board will do its best to accommodate all speakers who sign up, there is no guarantee
126 that all such individuals will be able to speak at any given meeting. If the number of speakers is
127 too large to be reasonably accommodated, the Chair may ask speakers to voluntarily combine their
128 comments or submit them in writing to the School Board. Speakers are limited to one presentation
129 per meeting.

130
131 **Time Limitations**

132
133 The Board allocates up at one hour for speakers at regular board meetings. ~~The overall time~~
134 allocation for Public Hearings is determined by the expected number of speakers and may be
135 adjusted to ensure all speakers who sign up have the opportunity to be heard by the Board.

Commented [MS8]: Added to allow the Board to set a different time allocation for Public Hearings.

136
137 Speakers are typically allocated three minutes each to deliver their remarks. Speakers requiring
138 accommodations including but not limited to, interpreters, speech & language difficulties, etc.

Commented [MS9]: Added to improve equity of the process.

139 where an interpreter is needed, will be allocated additional time necessary to support the
140 accommodations. The total time for public comments and public hearings and the time per speaker
141 are determined by the Chair, and may be adjusted depending on how many individuals have
142 signed up to speak at a particular meeting or based on any accommodations needed including but
143 not limited to, interpreters, speech & language difficulties, etc. While the School Board will do
144 its best to accommodate all speakers who sign up, there is no guarantee that all such individuals
145 will be able to speak at any given meeting. The Chair may adjust individual speaker time depending
146 on how many individuals have signed up to speak at a particular meeting.

Commented [MS10]: Added to improve equity of the process.

147
148 The Chair, with the assistance of the Clerk of the Board, monitors and enforces the time limitation
149 and in doing so will promptly cut off speakers who have not concluded their remarks in the time
150 allotted. A speaker who does not need the full time allotted may not yield unused time to another
151 speaker.

Commented [11]: For equity reasons, all speakers should be treated equally. Allowing some speakers additional time could result in bias.

152 153 154 155 **C. — Public Comments on Agenda and Non-Agenda Items**

156
157 All individuals may speak on agenda items or non-agenda subjects which relate to the operation
158 of the school division. Comments during public hearings shall be confined to the subject of the
159 hearing.

Commented [MS12]: Relocated to improve readability.

160 161 **D. — Addressing the Alexandria City School Board**

162
163 Recognition ~~by the Chair~~ is granted to one speaker at a time.

164
165 Speakers addressing the Board in person stand at a centrally located microphone and lectern and
166 precede their remarks with their name and the topic on which they will be speaking. Speakers
167 addressing the Board remotely via video conference use the “hand raise” function and wait to be
168 recognized ~~by the Chair~~. Once recognized, speakers will precede their remarks with their name
169 and the topic on which they will be speaking.

170
171 Comments ~~are should be~~ addressed to the entire ~~School~~ Board and not to individual Board
172 Members, the Superintendent, or other members of the audience. Since cumulative comments tend
173 to prevent other topics from being heard in a timely manner, —speakers are encouraged to limit
174 their comments when indicating support for or —opposition ~~for to~~ a previously stated position.
175 The ~~Ce~~Chair may conclude comments from any speaker if the ~~CC~~Chair determines the comments
176 are cumulative or are concerning inappropriate topics.

177 **Decorum**

178
179
180 Speakers, whether in person or via videoconference, are considered visitors and must follow ACPS
181 policy including Policy KK – School Visitors. As visitors, speakers, shall bear extended the
182 courtesy of the School Board and, in turn, speakers shall must respect the privilege extended by
183 the ~~School~~ Board by not disrupting the orderly conduct of the Board Meeting and are requested to
184 model the attributes of high-quality civic discourse. Speakers must use ~~using~~ commonly

185 accepted rules of courtesy, respect, decorum, dignity, and good taste. The use of obscenity,
186 vulgarity, or patently offensive language ~~shall will~~ be ruled out of order, as will words or
187 statements which, from their usual construction and common ———acceptance, incite violence or
188 breach of the peace. Speakers who repeatedly fail to comply with these standards of civic discourse
189 may be required to provide their comments in writing in lieu of the opportunity to present in person
190 or via videoconference.

Commented [MS13]: Revised to establish a process for speakers who repeatedly do not exhibit decorum norms.

191
192 ~~School Board Mmembers listen to public comment and public hearing presentations,~~
193 ~~but do not comment, deliberate or take action on them. Speakers may follow up with~~
194 ~~individual Board Members on the topic of their comments at a later date.~~

Commented [MS14]: Moved up to improve readability.

196 E. ~~Time Limitations~~

197
198 ~~Speakers are typically allocated three minutes each to deliver their remarks. In cases~~
199 ~~where an interpreter is needed, speakers receive an additional 3 minutes to support the~~
200 ~~translation.~~

201 ~~However, in all instances, the allocation of time for speakers is at the Cehair's~~
202 ~~discretion. The Cehair, with the assistance of the Clerk of the Board, shall monitor and~~
203 ~~enforce the time limitation and in doing so may cut off speakers who have not~~
204 ~~concluded their remarks in a timely manner. A speaker who does not need the full time~~
205 ~~allotted may not yield unused time to another speaker.~~

206
207 ~~All persons who have signed up to speak with the Clerk of the School Board prior to~~
208 ~~the start of the meeting are permitted to speak during the School Board meeting in the~~
209 ~~regular period designated for Communications and Addresses to the Board, subject to~~
210 ~~the limitations in Part B of this regulation.~~

Commented [MS15]: Moved up and revised.

212 F. ~~Inappropriate Topics~~

213
214 Public comment time at regular Board Meetings and public hearings are intended to allow the
215 community to address the ~~School~~Board regarding topics or subjects which relate to the operation
216 of the school division and are of public concern to the school community. — For these reasons,
217 and to ensure the privacy of individuals, Therefore, during the period reserved for public
218 participation at meetings, the ~~School~~Board does not allow public comments or complaints
219 regarding individual students, individual student disciplinary matters that are the subject of due
220 process ——— proceedings, matters involving pending employee grievance proceedings or
221 administrative hearings, or matters involving pending litigation. After litigation, public comments
222 on the situation may be shared, however student information should still be confidential. These
223 prohibitions are intended to protect student and staff privacy, however they do not prevent Parents
224 may reference parents from referencing parents may reference their own ACPS student but they
225 may not reference any students that is are not under their own legal care.
226 eference can be made to

Commented [MS16]: Revised to make it clear that people may speak about topics that have been resolved while still protecting privacy and ensuring that parents may speak about their own children.

228 Contact Information

229 Clerk of the Board
230 Alexandria City School Board

231 1340 Braddock Place, Suite 610

232 Alexandria, Virginia 22314

233 boardclerk@acps.k12.va.us

235 ACPS School Board

236 board@acps.k12.va.us

238 **Meeting Types**

239 The Board conducts its work through several types of meetings.

241 Meetings where public comment is taken:

- 242 • Regular Board Meeting – Meetings where the Board deliberates and makes decisions on the operations of ACPS.
- 244 • Public Hearings – Meetings where the Board takes public comment on specific topics.

246 Meetings open to the public where public comment is not taken:

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- 249 • Subcommittee Meetings – Meetings of an appointed subset of Board members for the purposes of developing recommendations for Board deliberation.

252 Meetings not open to the public:

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- 255 • Closed Meetings – Meetings where the Board deliberates and makes decisions on matters that are protected under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act such as personnel actions and contract related matters.

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266 Legal Refs.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 22.1-78, 22.1-253.13:7.

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268 *Baca v. Moreno Valley Unified Sch. District*, 936 F. Supp. 719 (C.D. Cal. 1996).

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270 *Bach v. School Board of the City of Virginia Beach*, 139 F. Supp. 2d. 738, 743 (E.D. Va. 2001).

273 Cross Refs.: BDDE Rules of Order

274 BDDH Public Participation at School Board Meetings

275 KK School Visitor

276 KL Public Complaints

Commented [17]: update language re: board discussion

File: BDDH-R/KD-R

