

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

10    Comments may be presented to the Board at any time by emailing such material to:  
11    boardclerk@acps.k12.va.us. Comments may also be addressed to the entire Board at  
12    board@acps.k12.va.us, or to individual Board Members at their email addresses listed on the  
13    ACPS website. If comments are provided in a language other than English, they will be translated  
14    by ACPS and provided to the Board.  
15

16    **Public Comments at Board Meetings or Public Hearings**  
17

18    The purpose of Board meetings is to allow the Board to conduct public business in an orderly and  
19    constructive manner. With the exception of certain public hearings, the Board is not required to  
20    provide public comment time but does so in order to receive the viewpoints of the community on  
21    general issues of public concern related to the operation of the school division.  
22

23    Individuals may speak at regular board meetings on agenda items or non-agenda subjects which  
24    relate to the operation of the school division. Comments during public hearings must be confined  
25    to the subject of the hearing. Public comments are typically not accepted at work sessions.  
26

27    Generally, Board members do not respond to public comment during a meeting or hearing. If  
28    follow-up is required due to the nature of the comments, the Superintendent will work with the  
29    School Board Clerk to respond accordingly following the Board meeting.  
30

31    The following rules are intended to minimize or avoid disruption, confine speakers to topics related  
32    to the operation of the school division, and to balance the Board’s informational needs with limited  
33    time and available resources.  
34

35    **Advance Request Procedure**  
36

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

- 39       • Those wishing to address the Board virtually should notify the Clerk of the Board by 12:00  
40       noon. on the day before the meeting. The clerk’s contact information is available on the  
41       ACPS website.
- 42       • Those wishing to address the Board in person may notify the Clerk of the Board by 12:00  
43       noon on the day before the meeting or may sign up in person between 5:45 and 6:15 PM  
44       on the day of the meeting. The in-person sign up will be in the Board room.  
45

46    Only individuals who have signed up will be permitted to speak. The Chair may make exceptions

47 for individuals who have a valid reason for not being able to meet the established deadlines.  
48 Requests for an exception should be provided to the Clerk of the Board.

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

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

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

### 65 66 **Order of Speakers**

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

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

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

### 81 82 **Time Limitations**

83  
84 The Board allocates up at one hour for speakers. Speakers are allocated three minutes each to  
85 deliver their remarks. Speakers requiring accommodations including but not limited to,  
86 interpreters, speech & language difficulties, etc. where an interpreter is needed, will be allocated  
87 additional time necessary to support the accommodations. The Chair may adjust individual speaker  
88 time depending on how many individuals have signed up to speak at a particular meeting.

89  
90 The Chair, with the assistance of the Clerk of the Board, monitors and enforces the time limitation  
91 and in doing so will promptly cut off speakers who have not concluded their remarks in the time  
92 allotted. A speaker who does not need the full time allotted may not yield unused time to another

93 speaker.

94

95 **Addressing the School Board**

96

97 Recognition is granted to one speaker at a time.

98

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

104

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

111

112 **Decorum**

113

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

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

138

139 Established: September 24, 2009  
 140 Revised: December 4, 2014  
 141 Revised: April 6, 2017  
 142 Revised: March 22, 2018  
 143 Revised: May 9, 2019  
 144 Revised: October 21, 2021

145  
 146 Legal Refs.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 22.1-78, 22.1-253.13:7.  
 147 2016 Op. Va. Att’y Gen. 15-020.  
 148 *Baca v. Moreno Valley Unified Sch. District*, 936 F. Supp. 719 (C.D. Cal. 1996).  
 149 *Leventhal v. Vista Unified School District*, 973 F. Supp. 951 (S.D. Cal. 1997).  
 150 *Bach v. School Board of the City of Virginia Beach*, 139 F. Supp. 2d. 738, 743  
 151 (E.D. Va. 2001).

152  
 153 Cross Refs.: BDDE Rules of Order  
 154 BDDH Public Participation at School Board Meetings  
 155 KK School Visitor  
 156 KL Public Complaints

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

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

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

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

24  
25 ~~The Alexandria City School Board welcomes communications from the community regarding~~  
26 ~~matters of general importance to the operation of the school division. Written comments may be~~  
27 ~~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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

47 ~~viewpoints of the community on general issues of public concern related to the operation of the~~  
48 ~~school division.~~

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

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

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

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

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

67  
68  
69  
70  
71 **A. Advance Request Procedure**

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.~~
- 80 • ~~Those wishing to address the Board in person may notify the Clerk of the Board by 12:00~~  
81 ~~noon on the day before the meeting or may sign up in person between 5:45 and 6:15 PM~~  
82 ~~on the day of the meeting. The in-person sign up will be in the Board room.~~

83  
84 ~~Only individuals who have signed up will be permitted to speak. The Chair may make exceptions~~  
85 ~~for individuals who have a valid reason for not being able to meet the established deadlines.~~  
86 ~~Requests for an exception should be provided to the Clerk of the Board, unless otherwise~~  
87 ~~requested by the Chair.~~

88  
89 ~~Speakers addressing the Board in person may sign up to speak until the start of the meeting.~~  
90 ~~Speakers addressing the Board remotely via video conference must sign up by 12:00 pm on the~~  
91 ~~day before the meeting.~~

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

97  
98 Speakers who require accommodations such as translation services are requested to notify the  
99 Clerk of the Board 48 hours prior to the meeting so ACPS can arrange for a translator. Speakers  
100 may instead bring a translator or provide the comments in writing. Comments provided in English  
101 will be read by the Clerk of the Board or their designee during the public comment period.  
102 Comments provided in a language other than English will be translated by ACPS and provided to  
103 the Board after the meeting.

Commented [MS5]: Added to clarify process around accommodations

104  
105 The Board encourages speakers to provide a written copy of their comments and supporting  
106 documentation. Anyone who wishes to provide documentary support for the comments they intend  
107 to present at the School Board meeting should provide thirteen copies of such  
108 documents to the Clerk of the Board email such material to the Clerk of the Board at  
109 boardclerk@acps.k12.va.us. If comments are provided in a language other than English, they will  
110 be translated by ACPS and provided to the Board.

#### 111 112 **B. Number and Order of Speakers**

113  
114 All persons who have signed up to speak with the Clerk of the School Board according to the  
115 established deadlines, and have been approved to speak, are permitted to speak during the Board  
116 meeting in the regular period designated for Communications and Addresses to the Board, or  
117 during the public comment 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?

118  
119 Students are generally placed at the beginning of the speaker queue. Other s Speakers are placed  
120 on a list in the order in which they notify the Clerk or at the discretion of the Chair. Students are  
121 generally placed at the beginning of the queue.

122  
123 While the Board will do its best to accommodate all speakers who sign up, there is no guarantee  
124 that all such individuals will be able to speak at any given meeting. If the number of speakers is  
125 too large to be reasonably accommodated, the Chair may ask speakers to voluntarily combine their  
126 comments or submit them in writing to the School Board. Speakers are limited to one presentation  
127 per meeting.

#### 128 129 **Time Limitations**

130  
131 The Board allocates up at one hour for speakers. Speakers are allocated three minutes each to  
132 deliver their remarks. Speakers requiring accommodations including but not limited to,  
133 interpreters, speech & language difficulties, etc. where an interpreter is needed, will be allocated  
134 additional time necessary to support the accommodations. The total time for public comments and  
135 public hearings and the time per speaker are determined by the Chair, and may be adjusted  
136 depending on how many individuals have signed up to speak at a particular meeting or based on  
137 any accommodations needed including but not limited to, interpreters, speech & language  
138 difficulties, etc. While the School Board will do its best to accommodate all speakers who sign

Commented [MS8]: Added to improve equity of the process.

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

139 up, there is no guarantee that all such individuals will be able to speak at any given meeting. The  
140 Chair may adjust individual speaker time depending on how many individuals have signed up to  
141 speak at a particular meeting.

142  
143 The Chair, with the assistance of the Clerk of the Board, monitors and enforces the time limitation  
144 and in doing so will promptly cut off speakers who have not concluded their remarks in the time  
145 allotted. A speaker who does not need the full time allotted may not yield unused time to another  
146 speaker.

Commented [10]: For equity reasons, all speakers should be treated equally. Allowing some speakers additional time could result in bias.

### 147 148 C. ~~Public Comments on Agenda and Non-Agenda Items~~

149  
150  
151 All individuals may speak on agenda items or non-agenda subjects which relate to the operation  
152 of the school division. Comments during public hearings shall be confined to the subject of the  
153 hearing.

Commented [MS11]: Relocated to improve readability.

### 154 155 D. Addressing the Alexandria City School Board

156  
157 Recognition ~~by the Chair~~ is granted to one speaker at a time.

158  
159 Speakers addressing the Board in person stand at a centrally located microphone and lectern and  
160 precede their remarks with their name and the topic on which they will be speaking. Speakers  
161 addressing the Board remotely via video conference use the “hand raise” function and wait to be  
162 recognized ~~by the Chair~~. Once recognized, speakers will precede their remarks with their name  
163 and the topic on which they will be speaking.

164  
165 Comments ~~are should be~~ addressed to the entire ~~School~~ Board and not to individual Board  
166 Members, the Superintendent, or other members of the audience. Since cumulative comments tend  
167 to prevent other topics from being heard in a timely manner, ~~—~~speakers are encouraged to limit  
168 their comments when indicating support ~~for~~ or ~~—~~opposition ~~for to~~ a previously stated position.  
169 The ~~Ce~~Chair may conclude comments from any speaker if the ~~CE~~Chair determines the comments  
170 are cumulative or are concerning inappropriate topics.

### 171 172 Decorum

173  
174 Speakers, ~~whether in person or via videoconference~~, are considered visitors and must follow ACPS  
175 policy including Policy KK – School Visitors. As visitors, speakers, ~~shall be~~ extended the  
176 courtesy of the School Board and, in turn, speakers ~~shall must~~ respect the privilege extended by  
177 the ~~School~~ Board by ~~not disrupting the orderly conduct of the Board Meeting and are requested to~~  
178 ~~model the attributes of high-quality civic discourse. Speakers must use using~~ commonly  
179 accepted rules of courtesy, respect, decorum, dignity, and good taste. The use of ~~—~~obscenity,  
180 vulgarity, or patently offensive language ~~shall will~~ be ruled out of order, as will words or  
181 statements which, from their usual construction and common ~~—~~acceptance, incite violence or  
182 breach of the peace. ~~Speakers who repeatedly fail to comply with these standards of civic discourse~~  
183 ~~may be required to provide their comments in writing in lieu of the opportunity to present in person~~  
184 ~~or via videoconference.~~

Commented [MS12]: Revised to establish a process for speakers who repeatedly do not exhibit decorum norms.



~~School Board 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 Members on the topic of their comments at a later date.~~

Commented [MS13]: Moved up to improve readability.

E. ~~Time Limitations~~

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

~~However, in all instances, the allocation of time for speakers is at the Chair's discretion. The Chair, with the assistance of the Clerk of the Board, shall monitor and enforce 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 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.~~

Commented [MS14]: Moved up and revised.

F. ~~Inappropriate Topics~~

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

Commented [MS15]: 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.

Established: September 24, 2009  
Revised: December 4, 2014  
Revised: April 6, 2017  
Revised: March 22, 2018  
Revised: May 9, 2019  
Revised: October 21, 2021

Legal Refs.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 22.1-78, 22.1-253.13:7.  
2016 Op. Va. Att'y Gen. 15-020.

231 *Baca v. Moreno Valley Unified Sch. District*, 936 F. Supp. 719 (C.D. Cal. 1996).  
232 *Leventhal v. Vista Unified School District*, 973 F. Supp. 951 (S.D. Cal. 1997).  
233 *Bach v. School Board of the City of Virginia Beach*, 139 F. Supp. 2d. 738, 743  
234 (E.D. Va. 2001).

235  
236 Cross Refs.: BDDE Rules of Order  
237 BDDH Public Participation at School Board Meetings  
238 ~~KK~~ ~~School Visitor~~  
239 KL Public Complaints  
240

Commented [16]: update language re: board discussion