

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 or the Division  
8 Superintendent to discuss or respond to the speaker's views nor act on a request or proposal.  
9

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

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

- 15 • Mailing or delivering thirteen copies of such material to:

16  
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:~~  
22 boardclerk@acps.k12.va.us.

23  
24 Electronic communications may also be addressed to the entire Board at  
25 board@acps.k12.va.us, or to individual School Board Members at their email addresses  
26 listed on the ACPS website. ~~School Board website at www.acps.k12.va.us/board.~~

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

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

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45 Members of the public who wish to address the Alexandria City School Board should  
46 notify the Clerk of the Board ~~in writing or by electronic communications (703-619-8316~~

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

Commented [2]: Removed specific reference as URLs may change.

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

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

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

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62 Anyone who wishes to provide documentary support for the comments they intend to  
63 present at the School Board meeting should provide thirteen copies of such documents to  
64 the Clerk of the Board ~~or email such material to clerk@acps.k12.va.us.~~

#### 65 66 B. Number and Order of Speakers

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

73  
74 The total time for public comments and public hearings and the time per speaker are  
75 determined by the ~~c~~Chair, and may be adjusted depending on how many individuals  
76 have signed up to speak at a particular meeting ~~or based on any accommodations~~  
77 ~~needed including but not limited to, interpreters, speech & language difficulties, etc.~~  
78 While the ~~School~~Board will do its best to accommodate all speakers who sign up, there  
79 is no guarantee that all such individuals will be able to speak at any given meeting.

#### 80 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 work sessions.~~

#### 87 88 D. Addressing the Alexandria City School Board

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90 Recognition by the 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 [3]:** 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 [4]:** Not every speaker may have all of these.

**Commented [5]:** Added to make process consistent with the above section which permits both written and electronic copies of communications to the Board.

**Commented [MS6]:** Added to improve equity of the process.

**Commented [MS7]:** Revised to improve clarity on when public comments are accepted.

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. 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, 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 Chair may conclude comments from any speaker if the 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~~ ~~will~~ 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.~~

**Commented [MS8]:** Revised to establish a process for speakers who repeatedly do not exhibit decorum norms.

School Board ~~M~~members listen to public comments ~~on agenda and non-agenda items~~ and public hearing presentations, but do not comment, deliberate or take action on them. ~~At public hearings, Board members recognized by the Chair may ask clarifying questions but do not otherwise comment.~~ Speakers may follow-up with individual Board 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. ~~In cases where an interpreter is needed, speakers receive an additional 3 minutes additional time necessary 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 enforces the time limitation and in doing so ~~may~~ ~~will promptly~~ cut off speakers who have not concluded their remarks in ~~a timely manner the time allotted.~~ A speaker who does not need the full time allotted may not yield unused time to another speaker.

**Commented [9]:** For equity reasons, all speakers should be treated equally. Allowing some speakers additional time could result in bias.

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

**Commented [10]:** This provides the flexibility to combine speakers or set maximum time limits. As written you could get 500 speakers.

**Commented [11R10]:** approval process?

the Board, subject to the limitations in Part B of this regulation.

F. Inappropriate Topics

Public comment time 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

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

- Cross Refs.: BDDE Rules of Order
- BDDH Public Participation at School Board Meetings
- KK School Visitor
- KL Public Complaints

**Commented [MS12]:** 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.

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**Commented [13]:** update language re: board discussion