

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

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

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

The Alexandria City School Board welcomes communications from the public regarding matters of general importance to the operation of the school division. Written comments may be presented to the Board at any time by mailing or delivering twelve copies of such material to the Clerk of the School Board, Alexandria City Public Schools, 1340 Braddock Place, Alexandria, Virginia 22314, or by electronic mail at [boardclerk@acps.k12.va.us](mailto:boardclerk@acps.k12.va.us). Electronic communications may also be addressed to the entire Board at [board@acps.k12.va.us](mailto:board@acps.k12.va.us), or to individual School Board members at the email addresses listed on the School Board Web site at [www.acps.k12.va.us/board/](http://www.acps.k12.va.us/board/).

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

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

#### **A. Advance Request Procedure**

Members of the public who wish to address the Alexandria City School Board should notify the Board Clerk in writing or by electronic communications (e.g., telephone, email) prior to the meeting date, but no later than the start of the meeting, to be placed on the list of speakers to address the Board during the time on the agenda for "Communications and Addresses to the Board." Only individuals who have signed up will be permitted to speak, unless otherwise requested by the Chair.

All speakers must provide the Board Clerk with their name, email address, home address and phone number in order to permit the Clerk to contact them if necessary. Speakers must also identify the issue of public concern upon which they will be speaking.

Any individual who wishes to provide documentary support for the comments he/she intends to present at the School Board meeting should provide ~~twelve~~ thirteen copies of such documents to the Clerk of the Board or by email at [boardclerk@acps.k12.va.us](mailto:boardclerk@acps.k12.va.us).

## **B. Number of Speakers**

Speakers shall be placed on a list in the order in which they notify the Clerk or at the discretion of the Chair. If the number of speakers is too large to be reasonably accommodated, the Chair may ask speakers to voluntarily combine their comments or submit them in writing to the School Board. The total time for public comments and the time per speaker will be determined by the Chair. While the School Board will do its best to accommodate all speakers who sign up, there is no guarantee that all such individuals will be able to speak at any given meeting.

## **C. Public Comments on Agenda and Non-Agenda Items**

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

## **D. Addressing the Alexandria City School Board**

Recognition by the Chair shall be granted to one speaker at a time. Speakers shall address the Board at a centrally located microphone and lectern and precede their remarks with their name and the topic which they intend to address. Comments shall be 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.

Speakers shall be extended the courtesy of the School Board and, in turn, speakers shall respect the privilege extended by the School Board by 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.

~~If any School Board member wishes further information at the conclusion of the speaker's remarks, the member shall address the speaker only with permission of the Chair. Any follow-up time with an individual speaker shall be limited as directed by the Chair. 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.~~

## **E. Time Limitations**

Time allotted each individual speaker shall be three minutes and each organization shall be five minutes. Current and former elected officials may be allotted five minutes. The Chair, with the assistance of the Board Clerk, 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 shall be 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**

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. Therefore, during the period reserved for public participation at meetings, the School Board shall not hear public comments or complaints regarding individual students, 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.

Established: September 24, 2009  
Revised: December 4, 2014  
Revised: April 6, 2017  
[Revised:](#)

Legal Refs.: 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  
KL Public Complaints