

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN BOARD MEETINGS BOARD POLICY

DESCRIPTION CODE: BCBI

Meetings of the Board of Education are held to conduct the affairs and business of the school system. Although these meetings are not meetings of the public, the public is invited to attend all meetings and citizens are invited to address the Board at all regular monthly meetings at the time shown on the agenda and in accordance with procedures established by the Board or the Superintendent. Public participation may be allowed at the discretion of the Board at certain additional meetings under procedures set by the Board. All members of the public attending any meeting of the Board must follow the Rules of Conduct set forth in the procedures.

The Superintendent shall make available these procedures to allow citizens to address the Board at regular meetings in accordance with this policy. These procedures shall include a requirement that sign up for non-agenda related topics be at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting and sign-up for agenda related items be at least 15 minutes prior to the start time of the meeting.

All comments to the Board in accordance with this policy are to be brief and are intended for the Board to hear from citizens but not to take action. Where the speaker seeks action of any kind by the Board or the District, the speaker is referred to paragraph 7 below.

RULES OF CONDUCT AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCEDURES

These procedures are in accordance with Policy BCBI and provide the Rules of Conduct, in accordance with *O.C.G.A. 20-2-58*, for all Board Meetings.

All attendees shall remember that while the meetings are open to the public, the purpose of the meeting is to conduct the business of the school system and members of the public are invited to participate only as allowed by the Board policy and these procedures.

1. Signs, flags and banners are prohibited inside the Board meeting room.
2. Each member of the public participating in public comment will be given three (3) minutes to speak. The Board or its Chair may limit the total time allocated for public participation as well as further limit the length of individual comments during public participation at its discretion for the purpose of the efficient operation of the business of the meeting.
3. Only residents of the School District, representatives of businesses or organizations located in the District, parents or guardians of students attending the schools of the District or school system employees may address the Board during the public participation. No individual or group will be retaliated against, in any manner whatsoever, for speaking during public participation.
4. The Board requests that multiple speakers from a group or organization appoint a single representative to address the Board.

5. Speakers may bring printed and other supporting materials. These materials should be given to the Superintendent or Board Chair and can be distributed to the other board members.
6. Issues involving individual employees or individual students and pending litigation are not subjects for public participation.
7. The public is urged to follow other resolution processes set forth in Board policy or available at individual schools, where those processes are clearly designed to address the issue to be raised. It should again be noted that the public participation is not designed for this purpose and the Board will not take action based on public participation.
8. The use of physically threatening remarks, hateful racial epithets and other comments or conduct by speakers or members of the audience that result in a disruption of the meeting will not be allowed.
9. The Board will not respond to comments made by the speaker during public participation unless a member of the Board chooses to ask a question. Speakers should remain at the microphone while answering questions.

By reading and acknowledging acceptance prior to speaking during public participation, speakers attest that they understand and will abide by these procedures. Those attending a meeting or speaking during public participation who violate these procedures in such a way as to cause a disruption of the meeting will be warned by the Chair. A continued violation may result in a speaker being asked to sit down. If any person attending a meeting refuses to follow these rules, further disrupting the meeting, they will be asked to leave and if they refuse, be escorted from the meeting room. Such serious or repeated violations of the rules of conduct may result in the individual being prohibited from speaking during a board meeting for an appropriate period of time. Any attendee violating the laws of the State while on District property or attending a meeting of the Board shall be subject to arrest by law enforcement.