

Procedures 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 the Alexandria City Public Schools, either by submitting written or electronic comments to the 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 issues 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, 2000 North Beauregard Street, Alexandria, Virginia 22311. Electronic communications may be addressed to the entire Board at the following link, <http://www.acps.k12.va.us/board/contactsb.php>, or to individual School Board members at the email addresses listed on the School Board Web site at 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 general 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 Chairman.

All speakers must provide the School Board Clerk with their 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 they intend to present at the school board meeting should provide twelve copies of such documents to the Clerk of the Board or send documents to the Board electronically through the ACPS website at <http://www.acps.k12.va.us/board>.

B. Number of Speakers

Speakers shall be placed on a list in the order in which they notify the Clerk. If the number of speakers is too large to be reasonably accommodated, the Chairman may ask speakers to voluntarily combine their comments or submit them in writing to the School Board. The total time for public comments will be determined by the Chairman. 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 of general public concern 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 Chairman 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 to indicate support or opposition for a previously stated position. The Chairman may conclude comments from any speaker if the Chairman 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, patently offensive, and defamatory language shall

be ruled out of order, as will words or statements which, from their usual construction and common acceptance, are construed as insults and tend to violence and 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 Chairman. Any follow-up time with an individual speaker shall be limited as directed by the Chairman.

E. Time Limitations

Time allotted each individual speaker shall be three minutes and each organization shall be five minutes. The Chairman, with the assistance OF the 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 a 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 overall 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 individual employees, matters involving pending or potential employee grievance proceedings or administrative hearings, OR matters involving pending or probable litigation.

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