

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 Board meetings or during public hearings.  
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8     **Written Comments**

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

16 The purpose of Board meetings is to allow the Board to conduct public business in an orderly and  
17 constructive manner. With the exception of certain public hearings, the Board is not required to  
18 provide public comment time but does so in order to receive the viewpoints of the community on  
19 general issues of public concern related to the operation of the school division.  
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21 Individuals may speak at regular board meetings on agenda items or non-agenda subjects which  
22 relate to the operation of the school division. Comments during public hearings must be confined  
23 to the subject of the hearing. Public comments are typically not accepted at work sessions.  
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25 Generally, Board members do not respond to public comment during a meeting or hearing. If  
26 follow-up is required due to the nature of the comments, the Chair of the Board (Chair) will work  
27 with the Superintendent and School Board Clerk (Clerk) to respond accordingly following the  
28 Board meeting.  
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30 The following rules are intended to minimize or avoid disruption, confine speakers to topics related  
31 to the operation of the school division, and to balance the Board’s informational needs with limited  
32 time and available resources.  
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34     **Advance Request Procedures**

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

- 37     • Those wishing to address the Board virtually should notify the Clerk by 12:00 noon on the  
38     day before the meeting. The clerk’s contact information is available on the ACPS website  
39     and in the Contact Information section of this regulation.  
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- 41     • Those wishing to address the Board in person may notify the Clerk by 12:00 noon on the  
42     day before the meeting or may sign up in person between 5:45 and 6:15 PM on the day of  
43     the meeting. The in-person sign up will be in the Board room. A minimum of five speaking  
44     slots will be reserved for in person sign up on the day of the meeting.  
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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.

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50 All speakers must provide the Clerk with their name, available contact information including  
51 (email address, home address and phone number), any required accommodations, and the agenda  
52 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 48 hours prior to the meeting so ACPS can arrange for a translator. Speakers may instead  
56 bring a translator or provide the comments in writing. Comments provided in English will be read  
57 by the Clerk or their designee during the public comment period. Comments provided in a language  
58 other than English will be translated by ACPS and provided to the Board after the meeting.

59  
60 The Board encourages speakers to provide a written copy of their comments and supporting  
61 documentation. Speakers may email such material to the Clerk at [boardclerk@acps.k12.va.us](mailto:boardclerk@acps.k12.va.us). If  
62 comments are provided in a language other than English, they will be translated by ACPS and  
63 provided to the Board.

#### 64 65 **Order of Speakers**

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

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

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

#### 79 80 **Time Limitations**

81 The Board allocates up to one hour for speakers at regular board meetings. The overall time  
82 allocation for Public Hearings is determined by the expected number of speakers and may be  
83 adjusted to ensure all speakers who sign up have the opportunity to be heard by the Board.

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

90  
91 The Chair, with the assistance of the Clerk, monitors and enforces the time limitation and in doing  
92 so will promptly cut off speakers who have not concluded their remarks in the time allotted. A

93 speaker who does not need the full time allotted may not yield unused time to another speaker.

94

95 **Addressing the School Board**

96 Recognition is granted to one speaker at a time.

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

103

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

110

111 **Decorum**

112 Speakers, whether in person or via videoconference, are considered visitors and must follow ACPS  
113 policy including Policy KK – School Visitors. As visitors, speakers are extended the courtesy of  
114 the School Board and, in turn, speakers must respect the privilege extended by the Board by not  
115 disrupting the orderly conduct of the Board Meeting and are requested to model the attributes of  
116 high-quality civic discourse. Speakers must use commonly accepted rules of courtesy, respect,  
117 decorum, dignity, and good taste. The use of obscenity, vulgarity, or patently offensive language  
118 will be ruled out of order, as will words or statements which, from their usual construction and  
119 common acceptance, incite violence or breach of the peace. Speakers who repeatedly fail to  
120 comply with these standards of civic discourse may be required to provide their comments in  
121 writing in lieu of the opportunity to present in person or via videoconference.

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123 **Inappropriate Topics**

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

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137 **Contact Information**

138 Clerk of the Board  
139 Alexandria City School Board  
140 1340 Braddock Place, Suite 610  
141 Alexandria, Virginia 22314  
142 boardclerk@acps.k12.va.us

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144 ACPS School Board  
145 board@acps.k12.va.us

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147 **Meeting Types**

148 The Board conducts its work through several types of meetings.

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150 Meetings where public comment is taken:

- 151 • **Regular Board Meeting** – Meetings where the Board deliberates and makes decisions on
- 152 the operations of ACPS.
- 153 • **Public Hearings** – Meetings where the Board takes public comment on specific topics.

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155 Meetings open to the public where public comment is not taken:

- 156 • **Work Sessions** – Meetings where the Board deliberates but does not make decisions on
- 157 the operations of ACPS.
- 158 • **Subcommittee Meetings** – Meetings of an appointed subset of Board members for the
- 159 purposes of developing recommendations for Board deliberation.

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161 Meetings not open to the public:

- 162 • **Retreats** – Meetings where the Board participates in professional learning and
- 163 collaboration activities.
- 164 • **Closed Meetings** – Meetings where the Board deliberates and makes decisions on matters
- 165 that are protected under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act such as personnel actions
- 166 and contract related matters.

167  
168 Established: September 24, 2009

169 Revised: December 4, 2014

170 Revised: April 6, 2017

171 Revised: March 22, 2018

172 Revised: May 9, 2019

173 Revised: October 21, 2021

174 Amended: May 4, 2023

175  
176 Legal Refs.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 22.1-78, 22.1-253.13:7.

177 2016 Op. Va. Att’y Gen. 15-020.

178 *Baca v. Moreno Valley Unified Sch. District*, 936 F. Supp. 719 (C.D. Cal. 1996).

179 *Leventhal v. Vista Unified School District*, 973 F. Supp. 951 (S.D. Cal. 1997).

180 *Bach v. School Board of the City of Virginia Beach*, 139 F. Supp. 2d. 738, 743

181 (E.D. Va. 2001).

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183	Cross Refs.:	BDDE	Rules of Order
184		BDDH	Public Participation at School Board Meetings
185		KK	School Visitor
186		KL	Public Complaints