



NEW HANOVER COUNTY SCHOOLS

New Hanover County Board of Education Call to the Audience Procedures and Rules of Decorum

Per Board Policy 2310, the Board will allow up to one hour of public comment for Call to the Audience. Community members may sign up to speak online beginning at the conclusion of the Agenda Review Meeting, which typically occurs one week prior to the Regular Board Meeting. The sign-up list will be full at 20 participants. If more than 20 participants sign up, a lottery will be conducted, and participants will be selected using a random number generator. Individuals will be notified if they are selected to speak. A lottery system will be used to determine speaking order regardless of the number of individuals who sign up.

In addition, community members may sign up to speak one hour prior to the Board meeting in person; five slots will be available. Please be reminded that messages that contain profanity or other derogatory language will not be permitted and the participant may be removed.

Rules of Decorum for NHC Board of Education Meetings and Speaking at Call to the Audience or Public Participation Opportunities

Respectful Behavior

- Silence all cell phones during the meeting
- Remain respectful and courteous to all in attendance (whether attendance is in-person or virtual). This includes NHC Board of Education members and NHCS staff.
- Refrain from using language that is lewd or obscene. • Shouting, calling out, and/or making disruptive noises during the Board meeting is prohibited.
- Approaching the dais without invitation from anyone other than staff is prohibited.

Call to Audience Speeches

- Speaking time is determined based on the number of speakers who sign up at each regular meeting.
- Speakers must keep their remarks within the allotted timeframe.
- Speakers who sign up for Call to Audience must be present and cannot yield their time to anyone else.
- If a speaker's name is called but speaker is not present for the assigned timeslot, speaker will be placed at the bottom of the list and called again at the end of the list.
- Maintain civility and respect during your remarks. Shouting, harassment, personal attacks, or other disruptive behavior will not be permitted.



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- Direct comments to the Board Chair, not to individual members directly. Comments should be limited to matters relevant to the work of the Board and may not include commercial advertisements or solicitations, or comments about issues, activities, or organizations that are unrelated to the Board's functions. Concerns regarding personnel matters should first be directed through the grievance process and should not contain current employees' names.
- Adherence to these guidelines is required. Speakers who violate them may be asked by the Chair to rephrase or redirect their comments.

Use of Signs at Board Meetings:

- Signs are permitted and can be used to accompany the speaker during their allotted Call to the Audience speaking time.
- Those bringing signs in support of a speaker can stand with the speaker during the speaker's designated time as long as the person holding the sign does not block the center aisle. The sign holder may also stand at their seat and hold their sign.
- Signs may not contain lewd or obscene wording or images.
- After Call to the Audience is concluded, signs cannot be raised in obstruction of the view of members of the audience or as a disruption to Board proceedings.

These rules of decorum are not an exhaustive list and may be revised as needed. They apply to all official meetings that are conducted by the NHC Board of Education. All attendees at Board of Education meetings must abide by these rules of decorum. Disrupting or disturbing meetings and/or engaging in threatening behavior may result in consequences, including but not limited to, removal from board meetings and, in the case of threatening or severely disruptive behavior, being trespassed from NHC Board of Education property.

As a duly elected body, the New Hanover County Board of Education is governed under Chapter 115C of the North Carolina General Statutes, and the meetings of the board are conducted as official open meetings in accordance with New Hanover County School Board Policy 2300 (Board Meetings) and Policy 2310 (Public Participation at Board Meetings). Rules of decorum that are set by the New Hanover County Board of Education must be adhered to in order for board proceedings to be conducted in a timely, efficient, and respectful manner and to ensure the work of the district is completed without hindrance or delay. North Carolina General Statute § 143-318.17 provides that any person who willfully interrupts, disturbs, or disrupts an official meeting and who, upon being



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directed to leave the meeting by the presiding officer, willfully refuses to leave the meeting is guilty of a Class 2 misdemeanor.

References: NC State Statute § 143-318.17. (Disruptions of official meetings.); NHCS Policy 2310 (Public Participation at Board Meetings); NHCS Board Policy 2300 (Board Meetings)
Basic rules of respect are common knowledge. Please use common sense and best judgment.