

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN BOARD MEETINGS
BOARD POLICY**

DESCRIPTOR 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 meetings at the time shown on the agenda and in accordance with procedures established by the Board and the Superintendent. Public participation may be allowed in 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 notice be given at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting. These procedures shall be available at the Superintendent's office and each regular Board 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.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN BOARD MEETINGS
REGULATION****DESCRIPTOR CODE BCBI-R****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. Further, for scheduling purposes at regular board meetings, prospective speakers during the public participation item on the agenda must sign up at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting with the Superintendent's Office. The Board will set aside an appropriate amount of time on the agenda of its regular meetings to hear comments from the public in accordance with these procedures. Speakers shall keep their remarks civil. Profane, rude, defamatory remarks, outbursts and personal attacks will not be allowed by speakers or members of the audience.

Comments at special meetings can only deal with the call of the meeting.

The Board welcomes and appreciates comments or suggestions from the public. The Board's purpose is to listen and to take under advisement any comments made. As a point of information, persons appearing before the Board are reminded that the members of the Board are without authority to act independently as individuals on official matters and therefore the Board does not answer questions at this time, nor does the Board reply to statements at this time. If a person wishes to make a complaint about an employee of the system, he/she must discuss this with the Superintendent first. This will enable the Superintendent to have the opportunity to resolve the complaint. If the complaint needs the Board's attention later, the Superintendent will bring the matter to the Board. 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 Board policy and these procedures.

1. Members of the public shall conduct themselves in a respectful manner that is not disruptive to the conduct of the Board's business. Signs, flags, and banners are prohibited inside the Board meeting room. Members of the public may not distribute unauthorized materials at meetings.
2. Speakers are asked to keep their remarks civil. The use of obscene, profane, vulgar, physically threatening or abusive remarks will not be allowed. Loud and boisterous conduct or comments by speakers or members of the audience are not allowed.
3. Each member of the public participating in public comment will be given no more than three minutes to speak. The Board or its Chair may limit further 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.

4. 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 public participation. If a minor wishes to address the Board, the minor must be accompanied by their parent or legal guardian. No individual or group will be retaliated against, in any manner whatsoever, for speaking during public participation.
5. The Board requests that any group or organization appoint a single representative to address the Board rather than multiple individual members of a group or organization addressing the board on the same topic.
6. All speakers shall address the Board by first stating their names. All remarks shall be made to the Board as a body and addressed through the Chair. Remarks shall not be addressed to individual Board members and should not be addressed to members of the audience in an inciteful manner.
7. Issues involving individual employees or individual students and pending litigation are not subjects for public participation. Where appropriate, 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.
8. The Board will not respond to comments made by the speaker during public participation.

By reading and acknowledging acceptance prior to speaking during public participation, speakers attest that they understand and will abide by these procedures. The Chair of the Board is responsible for enforcing these procedures. Those attending a meeting or speaking during public participation who violate these procedures 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 disrupting the meeting, they will be asked to leave and if they refuse, be escorted from the meeting room. Violations of the procedures 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.