

## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT BOARD MEETINGS**

*Policy Code:* **2310**

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Board meetings are conducted for the purpose of carrying on the official business of the school district. The public is cordially invited to attend board meetings to observe the board as it conducts its official business.

The board of education, as an elected representative body of the school district, also wishes to provide a forum for citizens to express interests and concerns related to the school district. To provide an opportunity for input while conducting an orderly meeting, individuals or groups may be heard by the board in accordance with this policy or policy 2300, section D, paragraph 2, which addresses public hearings.

### **REQUESTS TO PLACE ITEM ON THE AGENDA**

In order that the board may fairly and adequately discharge its overall responsibility, citizens desiring an item to be placed on the agenda for a specific board meeting should direct written requests to the superintendent at least six working days prior to the meeting.

The request should include:

- the name and address of the person or persons making the request;
- the organization or group, if any, represented; and
- a brief explanation of the nature of the item. Questions and/or materials to be presented to the board are to be submitted along with the request. Additional items may be added to the agenda by the board on a two-thirds vote of the board members.

The superintendent will confer with the chairperson of the board concerning whether to approve placing the requested item on the agenda, and to determine the appropriate meeting for such discussion. The superintendent, with the consent of the board chairperson, will accept or deny a request for inclusion on the agenda for any reason determined appropriate by the superintendent and chairperson.

The superintendent will notify the requesting party of the response to the request. The board may, by majority vote and notwithstanding prior denial by the superintendent, consent to hear a presentation where the appeal to speak is made immediately prior to or during the course of the meeting. The superintendent will explain any other processes available for addressing the concerns. (See section below, Reports of Complaints.)

The chairperson will establish the amount of time for individual or group presentations.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Each month, 20 minutes of the regularly scheduled board meeting will be set aside for citizens to address the board through public comment. A sign-up sheet will be available for any individual

or group to indicate their desire to address the board. The superintendent shall develop additional procedures to ensure that public comment sessions proceed in an efficient and orderly manner.

Board members will not respond to individuals who address the board except to request clarification of points made by the presenter.

Except in cases of emergency, information received during presentations will not be acted upon at the time it is received. It will take unanimous vote of the board members present to take action on a presentation considered to be of an unusual or emergency nature at the time it is presented.

Disruptions by any person or persons of a public meeting will be subject to action in accordance with G.S. 143-318.7.

If the board does not hold a regular meeting during a month, the board will not provide a time for public comment at any other meeting held during that month unless a majority of the board votes to allow public comment at the meeting or unless the purpose of the meeting is a public hearing.

#### **REPORTS OF COMPLAINTS**

Complaints about the performance of school personnel, implementation of board policy, the quality of the educational program or school facilities should be submitted initially for a response to the school district official responsible for the program or facility or to the superintendent. The superintendent or designee will make available this board policy and other relevant grievance procedures to any individual or group submitting a complaint.

Legal References: G.S. 143-318.10, 115C-36. -51

Cross References: Student and Parent Grievance Procedure (policy 1740/4010), Role of Board Members in Handling Complaints (policy 2122), Board Meetings (policy 2300), Board Meeting Agenda (policy 2330), Responding to Complaints (policy 1742/5060)

Adopted: February 6, 2006

Martin County Schools Policy 2310  
Public Participation at Board Meetings  
Administrative Procedures

1. The Martin County Board of Education will schedule up to 20 minutes at its regularly scheduled monthly school board meeting, generally the first Monday of each month, for individuals or groups who wish to address the Board. Any person or group can register to speak at a school board meeting until just before the meeting begins.
2. A sign-up sheet will be available in the Martin County Schools Administrative Office for any individual or group who wishes to address the Board at a regularly scheduled meeting. The sign-up sheet will request the following information:
  - The name, address, and phone number of the person or persons making the request;
  - The organization or group, if any, represented;
  - A brief explanation of the nature of the item.
3. The Board Chair will provide a summary of the standards for public comment prior to each session.
4. Individuals will be given three (3) minutes to make their presentations. Requests to speak for a group will be granted five (5) minutes to address the Board.
5. Individuals or groups will be called on to speak in the order on the sign-up sheet.
6. If an individual is not present or declines to speak, the next person on the sign-up sheet will be called upon.
7. If the 20-minute period ends during a speaker's presentation, the public comment period will end at the conclusion of the time period allotted to the presenter.
8. Any materials that the individual or group wishes to present to the Board should be submitted prior to the meeting so they can be distributed.
9. The Board will not respond to comments except to request clarification of points made by the presenter.
10. The superintendent will provide a written response for questions posed to the Board within ten working days of the meeting.
11. The Board will not hear public comments relating to personnel issues or student issues that are under investigation by the administration.