

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Board of Education
Upper Marlboro, Maryland

8345
Policy No.

BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICY

INTERNAL BOARD POLICIES

Public Comment

General Policy

The Board recognizes the need for members of the public to provide comments and opinions to the Members of the Board of Education regarding agenda items for designated meetings and on education in general. To receive such information, the Board of Education shall allow 45 minutes for Public Comment at each regularly scheduled Board of Education meeting for the purpose of permitting members of the public to address the Board on agenda items and other topics. . In addition, from time to time the Board of Education may establish special purpose Public Hearings for citizen comment, separate and apart from regularly scheduled meetings of the Board.

General Procedures: Public Comment

Members of the public wishing to avail themselves of the opportunity to address the Board of Education during the time allotted for Public Comment at a designated meeting of the Board, may register for that purpose either by calling the office of the Executive Assistant to the Board in advance of the meeting, or by registering with the Board Administrative Assistant prior to 10:30 a.m., on the date the meeting is scheduled to begin at 1:05 p.m., and prior to 4:30 p.m., on the date the meeting is scheduled to begin at 7:05 p.m. The Assistant may only accept the registration of the individual directly making the request.

Those speaking on an Agenda Item shall be given priority over those speaking on other topics. The Assistant when receiving the request shall ascertain:

1. Name of person calling.
2. Agenda Item/Subject on which he or she wishes to speak.
3. Anyone refusing to give this information under 1. and 2. above shall not have his or her name placed on the list.

The Executive Assistant/Administrative Assistant to the Board shall present to the Chair of the Board a roster of those registered for Public Comment, reflecting the order in which individuals have registered to speak on an agenda item and the names of speakers on other matters. The maximum number of speakers shall not exceed fifteen since the total time allotted is 45 minutes.

Persons wishing to address the Board regarding an agenda item will be listed on the roster to speak in the order of the identified agenda item. In cases where there are more than 15 speakers on agenda items, the Board may temporarily halt the public comment period to address and take action on those agenda items that have received public testimony only. Once those agenda items are addressed, the public comment period will resume.

Members of the public shall be allotted three minutes speaking time. Time shall be kept by designated staff, and an audible warning at the conclusion of three-minute time shall be sounded. Individuals may thereafter conclude their remarks in a sentence or two, but may not exceed an additional 15 seconds time, after which a repeat audible warning shall signal, the mike will be turned off, and the Chair shall call the next speaker. The Chair shall rule out of order the comments of any member of the public who verbally and personally attacks a school system employee or member of the Board of Education that are unrelated to their official duties. Further, the Chair of the Board of Education is to ensure that persons signed up to speak to an agenda item only address the agenda item and not some other topic. No members of the public, in speaking in the course of Public Comment, either to a general matter or to an agenda item, may yield their time to any other person.

The Chair may ask a staff member to meet with a person presenting testimony, if appropriate. Each person presenting testimony during Public Comment will receive a written response from the Chair, or the Chair's designee, as appropriate.

General Procedures: Public Hearings

Recognizing that certain contemplated actions of the Board of Education (e.g., boundary changes, proposed capital projects, proposed school closings, etc.) have extraordinary public impact or are of widespread public concern, the Board of Education may from time to time designate certain dates and locations for the purposes of Public Hearings on such announced topics.

The Board will allow individuals to register on-site on the day of the Public Hearing. The same time limitations shall apply to presentations at these hearings, as apply to individual and/or organizational presentations at regular meetings of the Board of Education. Public testimony may also be provided to the Board via email or written correspondence.

The Assistant to the Board shall accumulate the time requested for speakers at a Public Hearing. Recognizing that Public Hearings are for the purpose of hearing the opinion of

citizens, not for Board debate or interaction with the public, Board Members shall be limited in their comments. Board Members will be recognized by the Chair only for the following reasons: (1) To correct misinformation presented in testimony, and (2) To add information so that citizen comment may be heard in context. Board Members will not be recognized to question or debate citizens or to express their support or opposition to testimony presented on the issue being considered. The Chair should ask a staff member to meet with a person presenting testimony, if appropriate. Each person presenting testimony during Public Comment will receive a written response from the Chair or the Chair's designee as appropriate.

Policy Adopted
4/14/77

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2/28/80

Policy Amended
11/19/87

Policy Amended
5/10/90

Policy Amended
12/17/92

Policy Amended
5/27/93

Policy Amended
6/19/97

Policy Reviewed-No Revisions Required
5/5/03

Policy Reviewed – No Revisions Required
11/15/04

Policy Reviewed-No Revisions Required
10/10/05

Policy Amended
1/25/07

Policy Amended
4/19/08

Policy Amended
6/24/10

Policy Amended
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