

Regulation BCBI-R(1): Public Participation in Board Meetings - Request to Speak to the Board of Education & Rules of Conduct for Public Participation

Status: ADOPTED

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Public Participation in Board Meetings -Request to Speak to the Board of Education & Rules of Conduct for Public Participation

Any individual, organization or agency (“complainant”) may request the opportunity to comment or file a complaint with the Dawson County Board of Education if that complainant believes and alleges that a school or the local educational agency has not followed appropriate policies or procedures. The complainant must allege a violation that occurred not more than one (1) year prior to the date that the complaint is received, unless a longer period is reasonable because the complaint is considered systemic or ongoing. The request must be received by the office of the school superintendent a minimum of 24 hours prior to the next meeting of the Dawson County Board of Education.

A complaint must be made in writing and signed by the complainant. The complaint must include the following:

1. A statement of complaint.
2. The date on which the violation occurred.
3. The facts on which the statement is based.
4. A list of the names and telephone numbers of individuals who can provide additional information.
5. Copies of all applicable documents supporting the complainant's position.
6. The name, address, and phone number of the complainant.

Once the request is received, it will be forwarded to the superintendent of schools for review. The superintendent will either address the complaint directly or approve the request to be added to the agenda for the next meeting of the Dawson County Board of Education.

If a complaint involves other entities, the Local Education Agency (LEA) will send a copy of the complaint to the other entity. The LEA will contact the other entity to clarify the issues and review the complaint process. If the complaint cannot be resolved through this contact, the LEA will invite the entity to submit a written response to the LEA, and to provide a copy of the response to the complainant.

Appropriate LEA staff and/or the Dawson County Board of Education will review the information and determine whether:

1. Additional information is needed
2. An on-site investigation must be conducted, and/or
3. Other measures must be taken to resolve the issues raised in the complaint.

If an individual, organization, or agency is aggrieved by the final decision of the LEA, that individual, organization, or agency has the right to request review of the decision by the Georgia Department of Education. The review is at the Department's discretion. For complaints filed pursuant to Section 9503 (20 U.S.S. §7883, complaint process for participation of private school children), a complainant may appeal the LEA decision to the Georgia Department of Education no later than thirty (30) days from the date on which the complainant receives the decision of the LEA. The appeal must be accompanied by a copy of the LEA decision and include a complete statement of the reasons supporting the appeal.

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 time on the agenda must sign up at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting with the Superintendent's Office.

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.
2. Each member of the public participating in public comment will be given five minutes to speak. The Board or its Chair may limit 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.
3. 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. No individual or group will be retaliated against, in any manner whatsoever, for speaking during public participation.
4. The Board requests that multiple speakers from a group or organization appoint a single representative to address the Board.
5. 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.
6. 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 outlined in Board policy or available at individual schools, where those processes are clearly designed to address the issue to be raised.
7. Speakers are asked to keep their remarks civil. The use of obscene, profane, 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.
8. The Board will not respond to comments made by the speaker during public participation unless a member of the Board chooses to ask a question. Speakers should remain at the microphone while answering questions.

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. Such serious or repeated violations of the rules of conduct 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.
