

SCHOOL BOARD GOVERNANCE AND OPERATIONS

Procedures for Citizen Communications with the School Board

Prince William County Public Schools (PWCS) residents, employees, students, and business partners may present their views on issues of public concern which relate to the operation of PWCS, either by submitting written or electronic comments to the members of the Prince William County School Board, or by addressing the Board during the time periods designated for citizen comments at School Board meetings or during public hearings. These opportunities for community input do not require Board members or the Superintendent of Schools to discuss or respond to the speaker's views nor act on a request or proposal.

I. Written or Electronic Communications to the School Board

The Prince William County School Board welcomes communications from community members regarding issues of general importance to the operation of the School Division. Written comments may be presented to the Board at any time by mailing twelve copies of such material to the School Board Office, P.O. Box 389, Manassas, Virginia 20108, or by delivery to the Edward L. Kelly Leadership Center, 14715 Bristow Road, Manassas, Virginia 20112. Electronic communications may be addressed to the entire Board at pwcsclerk@pwcs.edu, or to individual School Board members at the email addresses listed on the School Board website at pwcs.edu.

II. Procedures for Addressing the Prince William County School Board During Citizen Comment Time or Public Hearings

The purpose of School Board meetings is to allow the School Board to conduct public business in an orderly and non-disruptive manner. With the exception of certain public hearings, the School Board is not required by law to provide citizen comment time, but does so in order to receive the viewpoints of the community on general issues of public concern related to the operation of the School Division. The following rules are intended to minimize or avoid disruption, confine speakers to topics related to the general operation of the School Division, and to balance the School Board's informational needs with limited time and available resources.

A. Advance Request Procedure

Citizens who wish to address the Prince William County School Board should either notify the Clerk of the School Board (Clerk) in writing or by electronic communications (e.g., telephone, email) prior to noon on the day of the Board

meeting, to be placed on the list of speakers for citizen comment time. Citizens may also sign onto the list of speakers maintained at the entrance to the School Board meeting room at the beginning of a regular Board meeting, but prior to 6:55 p.m. on the evening of the meeting. Any deviation from these procedures shall be at the discretion of the School Board Chairman.

All speakers must provide the Clerk with their address and phone number in order to verify their residency and permit the Clerk to contact them if necessary. Upon request, the Clerk will not release to the general public the address and phone number of the speaker. However, such information must be provided to any member of the public requesting the same under the Freedom of Information Act. Speakers must also identify the issue of public concern upon which they will be speaking.

B. Number of Speakers

Speakers shall be placed on a list in the order in which they notify the Clerk. If the number of speakers is too large to be reasonably accommodated, the Chairman may ask citizens to voluntarily combine their comments or submit them in writing to the School Board.

C. Citizen Comments on Agenda and Non-Agenda Items

Citizens may speak on agenda items or non-agenda subjects of general public concern which relate to the operation of the School Division, following approval of the consent agenda. Citizen comment during public hearings shall be confined to the subject of the hearing.

D. Addressing the Prince William County School Board

Recognition by the Chairman shall be granted to one speaker at a time. Speakers shall address the Board at a centrally located microphone and lectern and precede their remarks with their name, address, and the topic which they intend to address. Speakers who do not want to provide their address in public may identify themselves only by name if they have previously given their address to the Clerk. Comments shall be addressed to the entire Prince William County School Board and not to individual Board members, the Superintendent, or other members of the audience. Since cumulative comments tend to prevent other topics from being heard in a timely manner, speakers are encouraged to limit their comments to

indicate support or opposition for a previously stated position.

Speakers shall be extended the courtesy of the Prince William County School Board and, in turn, speakers shall respect the privilege extended by the Prince William County School Board by using commonly accepted rules of courtesy, respect, decorum, dignity, and good taste. The use of obscenity, vulgarity, and patently offensive and defamatory language shall be ruled out of order, as will words or statements which, from their usual construction and common acceptance, are construed as insults and tend to violence and breach of the peace. If any Prince William County School Board member wishes further information at the conclusion of the speaker's remarks, the member shall address the speaker only with permission of the Chairman.

E. Time Limitations

Time allotted to each speaker or combined group shall be three minutes. A speaker who does not need a full three minutes may not yield unused time to another. Speakers will be heard in the order in which their names were submitted to the Clerk; those who signed up in advance will be heard prior to those whose names were placed on the list on the night of the meeting.

Citizen comments will be heard at the scheduled time in the Board agenda for a maximum of 30 minutes (or slightly longer at the discretion of the Chairman, if the list of scheduled speakers can be cleared with only a small addition to the 30 minute maximum).

Speakers who cannot be heard within the initial allotted period will be allowed to speak after all other business on the Board agenda has been completed. This follow-up speaking period will continue until all speakers have been heard. As in the initial speaking period, no individual or combined group comments may exceed three minutes in length.

F. Inappropriate Topics

Citizen comment time and public hearings are intended to allow the community to address the School Board regarding topics or subjects which relate to the overall operation of the School Division and are of public concern to the school community. Therefore, during the period reserved for citizen participation at meetings, the Prince William County School Board shall not hear public

comments or complaints regarding individual students, student disciplinary matters that are the subjects of due process proceedings, matters involving individual employees who are the subject of grievance proceedings or administrative hearings, nor matters involving pending or probable litigation.

The School Board Chairman and Clerk of the School Board are responsible for implementing and monitoring this regulation.

The Associate Superintendent for Communications and Technology Services, or designee, is responsible for reviewing this regulation in 2019.