



Book	Norfolk City School Board Policies and Regulations
Section	B: School Board Governance and Operations
Title	Public Participation at School Board Meetings and Public Hearings
Code	BDDHZ/KDZ
Status	Active
Legal	Legal Ref. Updated: June 25, 2004 Replaced Norfolk Public Schools Blue Book Policy 2-36. Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 22.1-078, 22.1-79, 22.1-253.13:7.
Adopted	October 30, 1996
Last Revised	August 21, 2024
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Prior Revised Dates	June 15, 2016, April 21, 2021, August 21, 2024. Supplemental Policy added: Dec. 7, 2022. Supplemental Policy deleted: June 21, 2023. VSBA Revision: 02/2021, 2/2024

BDDHZ/KDZ. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS AND PUBLIC HEARINGS

The School Board of the City of Norfolk welcomes the community, including students enrolled in the division, to the business meetings and public hearings of the Board and dedicates time at these meetings to hear from the public on agenda items and other matters of concern. It is important for all community members to feel welcome and safe in the Board's business meetings and public hearings. Audience members will be expected to treat all attendees with respect and civility.

I. REQUEST TO SPEAK

Requests to address the Board may be made by signing up to speak at a business meeting or public hearing. A sign-up sheet will be available by the entryway, or requests may be made in advance with the Clerk of the Board.

II. SPEAKER PROCESS

At the time the speaker signs up to speak, the speaker will complete all requested information listed below on the designated sign-up sheet. This information is required by the Clerk for the record.

1. Name
2. Street Address and/or School
3. Email and/or Phone Number

4. Topic

At the time of public comment, when the speaker's name is called, the following steps will be followed:

1. The speaker will come forward to the speaker's podium. The speaker will state their name and whether they have a child in Norfolk Public Schools or if they are employed by the district.
2. The speaker will state their position and give facts and other relevant data.
3. If the speaker represents a group or organization, they may ask the others to rise and be recognized.
4. The speaker will give any written statements or supporting materials to the Clerk for the record.

Correspondence with School Board members is subject to the Virginia Freedom of Information Act. This means correspondence may be made public (1) if it deals with Norfolk Public Schools business and (2) if requested, even if marked confidential. Only a few topics are exempt from the disclosure requirement, such as information about identifiable students, and personnel information about individual employees.

III. SPEAKER TIME LIMIT

Speakers are limited to one appearance of three (3) minutes. When the Clerk signals the time is expired, the speaker will end their comments and be seated. The Board Chair will instruct speakers who exceed the time limit.

IV. GROUND RULES FOR ENGAGEMENT

1. One (1) person is to speak at a time.
2. Comments should be addressed to the Board, not an individual member.
3. Adhere to the three (3) minute time limit.
4. Comments should be focused on issues and solutions.
5. Disorderly conduct that threatens disruption of the meeting will be ruled out of order by the Board Chair and the speaker asked to cease and be seated. If the speaker does not stop upon request, they may be removed from the meeting. Disorderly conduct is defined by City Code Section 29-10.
6. All signs brought to the meetings are subject to the following:
 - a. Signs must be held by hand.
 - b. Signs cannot obstruct the view of others or television cameras.
 - c. Signs cannot be posted on the walls.

V. EXPECTATIONS OF THE BOARD

The speaker may address the Board on agenda items and matters of concern related to the Norfolk Public Schools. Personnel, disciplinary, and confidential matters may be addressed to the School Board directly via email at schoolboard@npsk12.com.

The School Board of the City of Norfolk does not respond to public comments at the time they are given. At the Board's request, the Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee will follow up with individuals as determined by the Superintendent.

Audience members will be expected to treat all attendees with respect and civility, just as Norfolk Public Schools expects of its students and staff.

VI. Student Participation

Students enrolled in a public elementary or secondary school in the division are allowed to address the School Board during any public comment or citizen participation portion of a School Board meeting. Such students must follow the same sign-up procedures and rules and restrictions relating to time, place, and manner of speaking that are adopted by the School Board and applicable to all public participants.

The School Board may require a student to provide identification in the form of a current student identification card or other school document, such as a report card or a personal school email address, before allowing the student to provide oral comments, in accordance with Virginia law.

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