

If A Tree Falls In The Forest

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If a citizen spoke during the public comment segment of a board meeting would the school board hear them? Since the board has absolutely no intention of communicating with citizens – constituents and others – why should the board? The board is not responding (unless the board wants to violate their own policy and appear prejudicial towards those they refused to address), if a response is “required” the superintendent will handle it...later. The board does not want to get involved – they want to be able to maintain plausible deniability. Guess they feel their time is better spent knitting or playing Solitaire on their laptops during those uncomfortable minutes during meetings.

Recently the board silenced a parent who attempted to address matters concerning her daughter. Several weeks later the board allowed another parent full access to discuss her daughter and other students. The board then had the audacity to respond to her in violation of their own policy. Since these two meetings, the board has decided to revise their policy. The board still does not intend to dialogue with us just let us air our grievances to the sound of silence.

Below are revisions being considered for public comments at their meetings.

All regular and special meetings of the Board will be open to the public; however, the Board may adjourn into closed or executive session in accordance with the Virginia Freedom of Information Act. The Board is interested in hearing the viewpoints of stakeholders. The Board will schedule time for public comment during all regular meetings and at special meetings when practicable

The Board will accept comments from the public during the Board meeting as designated on the Agenda; however, the Board may meet at times when the public may be present but may not comment. At the beginning of the public comment portion of a Board meeting, the Clerk of the Board will read a statement that describes the procedures governing public comment.

Public comments at a regular meeting shall relate to Agenda items or matters germane to the business or duties of the School Board. Comments at special meetings must be related to the purpose of the meeting. Speakers shall limit their comments to a maximum of five (5) minutes.

Individuals wishing to make public comment are encouraged to present written comments to the Board. Nine (9) copies should be provided to the Clerk of the Board in advance of speaking at the podium. Written comments will be circulated to all Board members and the Superintendent.

The Chair of the Board will be responsible for recognizing all speakers, maintaining proper order, and adherence to the five minute time limit. Adults shall identify themselves by name and address. Minors shall provide their name and, if applicable, their grade and school of attendance.

The Board expects that each speaker will be courteous and will address his/her comments to the entire Board as a body. The Chair of the Board is authorized to stop and/or have removed, any speaker who disrupts the meeting decorum and order, uses vulgar, obscene or profane language, or who makes loud, boisterous, disruptive, threatening or redundant remarks. ~~Matters of a confidential nature to include issues involving a student disciplinary matter, a complaint about an individual student or employee, or pending litigation, are not proper subjects for public comment and will not be allowed.~~ Speakers comment on individuals at their own risk of violating confidentiality laws and/or defaming the subjects of their comments. Neither the School Board, the Superintendent nor the school administration will respond publicly to any comments about individuals.

The Board is not obligated to act on any request or proposal presented by an individual citizen or group. The Board will not respond to citizen comments at the time they are given. Matters requiring a response will be directed to the Superintendent for research and response. The Superintendent may report back on such matters at a subsequent business meeting session as appropriate.