



Community Guidelines for Receiving Public Comment

Introduction

All Atlanta Board of Education meetings, other than executive sessions, shall be open to the public. Meetings shall be advertised by meeting notices posted at the Atlanta Public Schools (APS) Center for Learning and Leadership (CLL), notifications in the news media, and other appropriate means such as the APS Web site. Opportunities for public comments shall be provided at one or more meetings prior to a meeting where official board action is taken.

Public comment opportunities are available for the board to hear from interested members of the community. Board members do not provide responses or engage in direct conversation during public hearings. If stakeholders wish to receive an answer to a specific question, please contact the board's executive assistant or, for public hearings and the monthly community meeting, request a response by completing a written comment card at the speaker sign-in table. Members of the community may also submit non-personnel public comments to the board at the following email address: boardcomments@atlantapublicschools.us. The board executive assistant will read selected comments at the conclusion of the monthly community meeting.

A. Board Work Sessions

1. Work sessions shall be scheduled as necessary for the board to review and discuss pending issues.
2. The work session agenda shall be posted in the CLL and the news media shall be notified of the date, time, place and agenda at least 24 hours in advance.
3. No official board action shall be taken during a work session.
4. Minutes shall be kept of all work sessions. Following official approval, work session minutes are open to the public.
5. Work sessions shall be open to the public but time shall not be provided for public comment.

B. Public Comment During the Monthly Committee of the Whole Meeting

1. Following the board work session the board will enter into a Committee of the Whole to receive and discuss the superintendent's agenda.
2. The board may receive public comment on specific agenda action items prior to the board's discussion of agenda items during the Committee of the Whole meeting. The board shall receive general stakeholder comments at the community meeting.
3. The board shall allocate 30 minutes for public comment at the beginning of the Committee of the Whole meeting. Each speaker shall be given three minutes for comment.
4. Stakeholders, including elected officials, shall contact the board office at least one hour prior to the scheduled start time of the Committee of the Whole meeting to sign-in. The Board Office number is: (404) 802-2200.





5. Stakeholders who call-in within the sign-in time frame prior to the committee of the whole, but due to time constraints will not be able to provide comment at this meeting, may address up to three (3) minutes of comments to the board at the beginning of the community meeting if they so choose.

C. Public Hearings

1. At its discretion, the board may schedule public hearings for the purpose of receiving public comment on topics of high public interest or concern.
2. Public hearing notices shall be posted in the CLL and local schools, and distributed via various media, such as news media, APS website, and e-mail as appropriate.
3. Stakeholders wishing to speak during a public hearing must sign up at least 10 minutes before the start of the hearing at the sign-in table.
4. Elected officials may request time to address the board by contacting the board's executive assistant.
5. Each speaker shall be heard only once during the hearing. The board shall allocate one hour and thirty minutes for public comment during public hearings.
6. Each speaker will be given up to two (2) minutes. At the end of the two-minute limit, individuals will be asked to end their comments and leave the podium. The board may elect to hear community comments in any order or sequence and is not limited by the arrangement shown on the sign-up sheets.
7. Community members presenting highly detailed or complex information are asked to provide a written outline of their comments for the board members.
8. The board will not take public comment on personnel issues or statements regarding the character, professional competence, or the physical or mental health of an individual during a hearing. Communications regarding personnel issues should be sent in writing to: Atlanta Board of Education, 130 Trinity Ave, Atlanta, Georgia 30303.
9. Persons are expected to honor meeting decorum. Applause, cheering, jeering, or speech that defames individuals or stymies or blocks meeting progress will not be tolerated and may be cause for removal from the meeting or for the board to suspend or adjourn the meeting.
10. Minutes of public hearings shall be prepared in summary form. After official approval by the board, summary minutes are open to the public. A verbatim transcript of the proceedings will not be prepared.

D. Community Meeting

1. The board shall allocate one hour to hear from the community during the monthly community meeting on any issue other than personnel.
2. Stakeholders wishing to address the board must register in person at the sign-in table from 5:00 pm to 5:50 pm on the day of the community meeting. Community members must list their names and the agenda item or topic they wish to address.
3. Elected officials may request time to address the board by contacting the board's executive assistant.





4. If several individuals are concerned with the same issue and share the same opinion, they are required to select a spokesperson to represent the group.
5. Community members signing up to speak will be given up to two (2) minutes. At the end of the two-minute limit, individuals will be asked to end their comments and leave the podium. Speakers will address the board in the order in which they signed in.
6. Stakeholders presenting highly detailed or complex information are asked to provide a written outline of their comments for the board members.
7. The board will not take public comment on personnel issues or statements regarding the character, professional competence, or the physical or mental health of an individual during public meetings. Communications regarding personnel issues should be sent in writing to: Atlanta Board of Education, 130 Trinity Ave, Atlanta, Georgia 30303.
8. Persons are expected to honor meeting decorum. Applause, cheering, jeering, or speech that defames individuals or stymies or blocks meeting progress will not be tolerated and may be cause for removal from the meeting or for the board to suspend or adjourn the meeting.
9. Board meeting attendance cannot exceed the seating capacity of the room in which the meeting is scheduled to be held. Whenever possible, the board will provide overflow seating for the meeting.
10. Minutes shall be kept of all regular school board meetings. After the minutes are officially approved by the board, which is generally at the next meeting, the minutes are open for public inspection via the online board agenda or by contacting the board office. Copies of board meeting minutes may be requested for a fee of \$0.10 per page.

E. Regional Community Meeting

On a rotating basis the board shall each quarter hold one regional community meeting to receive public comments on relevant school district issues. The board shall allocate one hour and thirty minutes to receive public comment on any issue other than personnel. The same guidelines for the community meeting will apply (See Section D).

F. Executive (Closed) Sessions

1. Closed sessions shall be held pursuant to the Georgia Open Meetings Act and policy BCBK Executive Sessions.
2. A notice of the closed session shall be posted in the CLL and the news media shall be notified of the date, time, place and purpose of the meeting at least 24 hours in advance.
3. Closed sessions are not open to the public or news media.
4. Records of the meetings shall be consistent with state law.

