



Guidelines for Public Comment During School Board Meetings and Public Hearings

Speaking at a School Board Meeting:

- The Arlington School Board welcomes public comment at most regular meetings and at public hearings.
 - Public comment is one way to express your views to School Board members.
 - Other ways to engage with the School Board include signing up for Open Office Hours or making an individual appointment, virtually or in-person. Additionally, the community is welcome to send an email, call the Board office, leave a voicemail message, or write a letter.
- The Board allows 1 hour for Public Comment on all agenda and non-agenda topics. All comments should address a matter related to Arlington Public Schools.
- Generally, School Board members do not respond to public comment during a meeting or hearing. If follow-up is required due to the nature of the comments, the Superintendent will work with the School Board Clerk to respond accordingly following the Board meeting.
- The Board may adjust or waive the speaker guidelines and the time allocated for public comment as needed in response to unusual circumstances.
- Each speaker may speak for up to 2 minutes. The clerk will start the timer when the speaker begins and speakers should conclude their remarks when the buzzer sounds.
- The School Board encourages speakers to also provide their comments in writing. Please email comments to school.board@apsva.us.
- Please be sure to state your name and the topic you will speak about when you begin.
- Speaker substitutions are not permitted. A speaker may not yield their time to another individual before or during their remarks. Sign-ups on someone else's behalf will not be permitted.

Decorum:

- The School Board expects that each speaker will be courteous, modeling for our students how one can respectfully disagree with others' views.
- The School Board requests that comments on an *individual* student or employee-related matter not be shared at public meetings where the disclosure could violate applicable confidentiality requirements.
- Speakers shall maintain civility, decorum, and respect at all times. When reasonable, the Chair will warn a speaker of breaches to the School Board Guidelines for Public Comment prior to terminating speaking privileges or taking other action to maintain the orderly conduct of the meeting.
- Speakers should address their comments to the entire School Board and not to one individual Board member, the Superintendent, a staff member, or the audience.
- The School Board appreciates hearing all points of view. In order to ensure that all speakers have the opportunity to be heard, we ask audience members to refrain from applauding or commenting.
- Inappropriately loud conversations or outbursts from those in attendance will not be tolerated, and security staff will be asked to restore order.
- During in-person meetings, all attendees will be expected to comply with health and safety guidelines.

Accommodations:

- The School Board provides accommodations for persons with disabilities or who need an interpreter. Advanced notice for these services is requested.
- If a speaker addresses the Board in a language other than English and has an interpreter, both the speaker and the interpreter will have 2 minutes to speak separately or 4 minutes together to translate the comments for the Board.

If you have any questions, please contact the School Board Office at school.board@apsva.us or 703-228-6015.