

Regulation BCBI-R(1): Public Participation in Board Meetings

Status: ADOPTED

Original Adopted Date: 01/14/2014 | **Last Revised Date:** 04/12/2022 | **Last Reviewed Date:** 04/12/2022

This regulation is adopted to preserve the orderly pursuit of the business of the Baldwin County Board of Education ("Board") and to provide proper opportunities for legitimate and objective discussion and analysis of matters presented by citizens. These rules are not designed to restrict the scheduled appearance of persons who have regular business with the Board and whose presentations are provided for in the agenda.

A. Board Expectations

The Board will hear public commentary from any interested Baldwin County citizen or community member, Baldwin County taxpayer, and/or employee of Baldwin County School District ("District"). Students under the age of 18 must be accompanied by the student's parent/guardian.

B. Guidelines for Receiving Public Comment

1. **Community and Public Participation.** The Board provides a maximum thirty (30) minute Community and Public Participation Session at each regular monthly Board meeting to allow individuals, as identified in Section A of this regulation, an opportunity to address the Board. The public comment session will be listed on the agenda. The Board may move on to the next agenda item if less than thirty minutes is needed to accommodate the individuals that requested to address the Board or no individual requests to address the Board.
2. **Procedures for Speaking During the Community and Public Participation Session.** The following procedures will apply to all public comments made to the Board:
 - a. Before addressing the Board, individuals are asked to seek a satisfactory solution to their concerns by following the proper staff and administrative channels (Example: teacher, principal, director, assistant superintendent, Superintendent).
 - b. Regular Monthly Board Meetings
 - i. Individuals that still wish to address the Board must complete the Request to Address the Board form (See BCBI-E(1), which requires speakers to provide the following information:
 - a. Name;
 - b. Address;
 - c. Discussion topic and which, if any, Board agenda item is related to the topic;
 - d. Whether the speaker is a District student or parent/guardian of a student in the District; a resident of Baldwin County; a non-resident property owner within the geographic boundaries of the District; and/or a District employee;
 - e. The name of school officials with whom the matter has already been discussed; and
 - f. Whether or not they have any materials to submit to the Board.
 - ii. The Request to Address the Board form must be received at least twenty-four (24) hours in advance of the scheduled regular Board meeting.
 - iii. These forms may be submitted by mail (Attn: Executive Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent, 110 North ABC Street, Milledgeville, GA 31061) or email to (boardpublicmeeting@baldwin.k12.ga.us).
 - c. **Speakers Addressing the Board**
 - i. Individuals who request the opportunity to speak must be recognized by the Board Chair before attempting to address the Board.
 - ii. Speakers shall have a maximum of three (3) minutes each and must stop speaking promptly when their time is up.
 - iii. An individual may not sign up for another person to speak.
 - iv. When addressing the Board, a speaker must:
 - a. State their name and the group, if any, the speaker is representing to the Board prior to beginning public commentary;
 - b. End their remarks when the allotted time expires; and
 - c. Direct public commentary to the Board as a body and not to individual Board members.
 - v. Speakers may not gain an additional opportunity to speak by passing,

- reserving, or dividing their allotted time to other speakers.
- vi. Speakers from the same group or who share the same concerns on a particular matter are encouraged to select a spokesperson to represent the group. If several speakers wish to address the same matter, the Board Chair or presiding officer may limit the number of individuals speaking for or against a specific issue. The Board reserves the right to limit repetitive comments.
 - vii. Speakers will be scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis.
 - viii. Speakers may request to speak regarding any item on the monthly agenda. Under circumstances to be determined by the Board Chair or presiding officer, speakers may speak regarding items, not on the monthly agenda.
 - ix. Speakers wishing to share materials with the Board (i.e., letters, photos, petitions, written comments, or other documentation) must present the materials via email to the Executive Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent (boardpublicmeeting@baldwin.k12.ga.us) twenty-four (24) hours before the scheduled meeting. If the information cannot be submitted electronically to the Executive Assistant to the Superintendent, speakers are asked to provide seven (7) copies of these materials. The following individuals will receive a copy of any materials:
 - a. Each Board Member;
 - b. Superintendent; and
 - c. Executive Assistant to Superintendent.
 - x. Speakers should be aware that their public commentary may be broadcast live, filmed, photographed or recorded by the District or other non-District media sources. Any portion of the public commentary that is not in compliance with this Policy (such as statements prohibited below) and/or applicable broadcast authority may be edited prior to broadcast.
- d. The Board requests that speakers maintain appropriate decorum and that comments remain focused and respectful. In addition to the guidelines in this Policy, public commentary will not be permitted if:
- i. The topic is excluded by the Open Meetings Act (O.C.G.A. §§ 50-14-1 et seq.). This includes, but may not be limited to, certain land, legal or personnel items;
 - ii. The speaker makes obscene, profane, vulgar, defamatory, slanderous, or threatening gestures/remarks during his/her public commentary;
 - iii. The speaker discusses a student by name, or shares other information that could lead to the personal identification of a student, as prohibited by the Family and Educational Rights Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1232g;
 - iv. The speaker disrupts or attempts to disrupt the Board meeting; or
 - v. Concerns or potential issues regarding specific individuals or employees should be addressed privately with the appropriate District administrator. Further, speakers will not be allowed to make untrue, slanderous, or defamatory comments or other unsubstantiated claims about an identified or identifiable employee. Speakers will also not be allowed to make comments regarding pending personnel matters that may be the subject of an investigation or a final personnel decision has not been reached.
3. At the conclusion of each presentation, the Board Chair shall acknowledge and thank those citizens who addressed the Board for their interest and concern. Board members will not respond to comments from speakers. The Board Chair or presiding officer will refer speakers to the Superintendent and District staff, as necessary, for further resolution.

2. Violation of this Regulation

1. The Board vests its Chair or other presiding officer with the authority to terminate the remarks of any individual who does not adhere to the guidelines established herein.
2. The Board will not permit abusive language, comments, applause, cheering, jeering, or shouts from the audience. Disruptive persons may be removed from the meeting room.
3. Any person who willfully violates these guidelines may forfeit the remainder of their speaking time, be asked to leave the meeting, and the Board may, in consultation with the Board's Legal Counsel, issue a written notice prohibiting the speaker from appearing before the Board for up to sixty (60) days.

