

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS

Members of the community are invited and encouraged to attend meetings of the Tazewell County School Board to observe its deliberations. Any member of the community may address the Board on matters related to the Tazewell County Public Schools at any regular meeting as provided in the accompanying regulation. Persons wishing to address the School Board are requested to contact the superintendent, the School Board chairman, or their designee for placement on the agenda.

The chairman is responsible for the orderly conduct of the meeting and shall rule on such matters as the appropriateness of the subject being presented and length of time for such presentation. Upon recognition by the chairman, the speaker shall address himself to the chairman and if, at the conclusion of his remarks, any member of the School Board desires further information, the member will address the speaker only with the permission of the chairman. No one will be allowed to make additional presentations until everyone who wishes to speak has an opportunity to make an initial presentation.

A reasonable period of time, as determined by the School Board, will be allocated at each regular meeting for community members to present matters of concern.

Adopted: August 8, 2016

Legal Ref.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 22.1-78, 22.1-253.13:7.

Cross Ref.: BDDE Rules of Order

SCHOOL BOARD BYLAWS

Public Participation

The Tazewell County School Board invites public input from employees, parents, students, and citizens of Tazewell County regarding the policies and general operation of the Tazewell County Public Schools. Individuals desiring to address the school board about educational policies or educational issues in the purview of authority of the school board will be afforded an opportunity to speak based on compliance with the following rules:

1. Fifteen (15) minutes will be reserved at each regular meeting of the Tazewell County School board for the purpose of receiving public input. At the discretion of the Board, time may be extended if deemed necessary and appropriate. Individual commentary will be limited to three (3) minutes and to one subject. Citizens or delegations wishing to make a presentation longer than three (3) minutes to the Board shall submit such request, in writing, to the division superintendent a minimum of seven (7) days in advance of the Board meeting. The Board Chair shall have the authority to determine the amount of time a citizen or delegation has to address the Board. In case of a delegation, the Board Chair may also limit the number of speakers. The Board, by a majority vote, may overrule the decision of the Chair. During the public comment portion of the agenda, the School Board will not entertain comment regarding any pending student discipline or employee grievance matter. Commentary will be limited to items on the agenda or a topic being considered for future agenda items. Persons wishing to address the Board should sign up before the meeting.

Individuals desiring to comment on items not included on the agenda must first discuss their ideas or concerns with the Division Superintendent. The Board will not allow an individual to misuse the intent of the public comment period by repeatedly discussing the same topic or topics not germane to school board business.

2. Speakers may offer objective criticism relative to school operations and programs of concern. The Board will not hear personal complaints about school personnel or any person connected with the school system during the public session. Complaints regarding personnel should be referred to the division superintendent or school board chairperson.

Speakers are expected to show appropriate courtesy to school board members when addressing the Board, as the Board is committed to showing respect and courtesy to all citizens. Speakers should avoid references, statements, or conduct likely to result in disruption or undue delay in the orderly transaction of the business scheduled for consideration by the Board. This provision means and includes, but is not limited to, attacks or accusations regarding the honesty, character, integrity or other personal attributes of any identified individual or group.

3. Expressive activities including, but not limited to, petitioning, picketing, displaying signs or posters, solicitation, demonstration, pamphlet distribution, and the conduction of polls shall not be permitted in the Board chambers, the Board conference room, the waiting areas and corridors adjacent to the chambers and conference room, the School Board administration

building, or any school building in which the Board is meeting. This bylaw does not preclude persons addressing the Board from delivering the Board or its Clerk written materials including reports, statements, exhibits, letters, or signed petitions. This bylaw does not preclude those addressing the Board from using a chart or graph during their verbal presentation.

4. Members of the audience are not permitted to interrupt the speaker or meeting by asking questions or making comments.
5. Patrons who have a complaint regarding an individual student or employee are expected to first attempt to resolve those issues with the appropriate principal, department head, and/or division superintendent. The school board will decide whether to hear issues regarding individual students or employees based on the merit of each individual case. If the Board decides to hear an issue, the Board will determine if it qualifies for closed meeting.
6. To assure that accurate data are given to inquiries made at school board meetings, the Board will normally not respond to the speaker during the meeting. The superintendent/designee will provide the appropriate data at a later date.
7. Violations of the rules for public input will result in the Chairman ruling the speaker out of order.
Continued violation will result in having the speaker barred from making input at future Board meetings.
8. The Chairman, or other presiding officer, shall preserve decorum and shall decide all questions of public order, subject to appeal to the Board.

The reserved time for public participation at meetings of the Tazewell County School Board is limited to discussions affecting policy or operational procedures of Tazewell County Public Schools.