

Book	Policy Manual
Section	180 - Board of Education: Meetings
Title	Public Comment
Number	180.06
Status	Active
Legal	Maryland Open Meetings Act General Provisions Article §§3-101-402
Adopted	June 11, 2006
Last Revised	July 21, 2022
Last Reviewed	July 21, 2022

The Maryland Open Meetings Act states the public be provided notice of meetings of a public body and that the meeting shall be held in places reasonably accessible to individuals who would like to attend these meetings.

A. Public Comments

While there is no requirement to provide the public an opportunity to speak at such meetings, the Board of Education of Dorchester County (the Board) recognizes the value of and encourages community input. There may be time set aside for the public to present at each board meeting. Individuals wishing to speak must indicate their desire to present by signing in upon arrival at the meeting.

- a. The number of speakers will be limited to twenty (20) total for each monthly Board meeting. Individuals will speak in the order in which they registered.
 - b. Those individuals that cannot attend the public comment portion of the Board meeting may submit written comments to the Board via comments@dcpsmd.org. to be included in the official record
 - c. Only one individual may speak at a time. They may not offer to share or split their time with others.
2. Persons attending the Board meeting may not show signs or posters or use other means that may disrupt the session or interfere with the rights of members of the public to observe the session.
 3. Each speaker shall;
 - a. Address all comments directly to the Board
 - b. Speak only from the designated location for public comments

- c. Be limited to no more than three (3) minutes. Time is monitored through the use of a timer and when three minutes expire, the speaker is permitted to complete a sentence but should make no further remarks.
4. Public comments about the actions or statements of individual staff members or students are not permitted for verbal comments to the Board. Any such questions or concerns should first be referred to the individual school or to appropriate staff.
5. Verbal comment to the Board shall not include comments about the following:
 - a. Matters that are on appeal to the Board
 - b. Advertising or solicitation for products and/or services
 - c. Contract negotiations
 - d. Individual personnel issues
 - e. Complaints identifying individual students or staff members
6. The Board expects all speakers to exhibit civil behavior which includes, but is not limited to:
 - a. Respectful and courteous language, demeanor, and actions
 - b. Respectful and appropriate tone and volume of voice
 - c. Respectful acknowledgment of individual differences
 - d. Respectful acknowledgement of diversity
 - e. Respectful of the personal, civil, and property rights of others

B. Board Protocol

1. Board members do not respond to comments made during oral presentations at the Board meetings.
2. The Superintendent will work with appropriate staff to follow-up as needed with individual presenters.
3. To ensure compliance with this policy, the Board's presiding officer may take further actions including, but not limited to:
 - a. Remove from the session any person who persists in conduct prohibited under this policy
 - b. Require the immediate termination of the oral presentation of any person not in compliance with this policy
 - c. Request law enforcement assistance to restore order
 - d. Recess the session if necessary