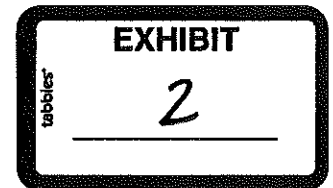




Book	Board Policy Manual
Section	1. Governance & School Board Operations
Title	Board Meetings - Public Comment
Code	BC-R(1)
Status	Active
Adopted	July 9, 2012
Last Revised	November 2, 2015



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, inquiries should be directed to the board office. For public hearings and the monthly community meetings, stakeholders may request a response by completing a written comment form at the speaker sign-in table. Members of the community may also submit public comments to the board at the following email address: boardcomments@atlantapublicschools.us.

Guidelines for Receiving Public Comment

A. Board Work Sessions for Presentations and Discussion

1. Work sessions shall be scheduled as necessary for the board to review and discuss pending issues and to receive presentations from the administration.
2. The work session agenda shall be posted online and in the CLL. 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, however, time will not be provided for public comment.

B. Public Hearings

1. The board will conduct all legally required public hearings in accordance with state statute and these guidelines.

2. At its discretion, the board may schedule public hearings for the purpose of receiving public comment on topics of high public interest or concern.
3. Public hearing notices shall be posted in the CLL and local schools, as well as distributed via various outlets such as news media, APS websites, and e-mail as appropriate.
4. 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.
5. Elected officials may request time to address the board by contacting the board office.
6. Each speaker shall be heard only once during the hearing. The board shall allocate one hour for public comment during public hearings.
7. 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.
8. Community members presenting highly detailed or complex information are asked to provide a written outline of their comments for the board members.
9. In order to maintain appropriate meeting decorum, follow appropriate protocols, protect the confidentiality of students, and ensure the impartiality of the board, the board will not entertain comments on matters involving individual students, parents or the character, professional competence, or the physical or mental health of an individual. The board will not take public comment on personnel matters that specifically include the names or titles of employees; this includes but is not limited to: contract non renewals, position abolishment, the hiring or firing of staff, and investigative proceedings regarding allegations of misconduct. Communications regarding personnel issues should be sent in writing to: Atlanta Board of Education, 130 Trinity Ave, Atlanta, Georgia 30303 or via email at boardcomments@atlantapublicschools.us.
10. Persons are expected to honor meeting decorum. Applause, cheering, jeering, or speech that defames individuals, stymies or blocks meeting progress will not be tolerated and may be cause for removal from the meeting or suspension and/or adjournment of the meeting by the board.

C. Community Meeting

1. The board shall allocate one hour to hear from the community during the monthly community meeting on any agenda and non-agenda items other than matters listed in section 7 below. If there are more speakers than time allotted, the board may elect to continue the community meeting after the conclusion of its legislative actions.
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. When signing up to speak, each person must provide the following information: name, address, telephone number, the agenda item or other topic to be addressed and, if applicable, the group or organization the person represents. An individual may not sign up for another person.
3. First priority will be given to APS students who sign in to speak. Students will be followed by any elected officials who have requested to address the board by contacting the board office in advance of the meeting. Third priority will be given to speakers who sign up to speak on agenda items. Additional speakers will be called in the order in which they signed up to speak.
4. If several individuals from the same group are concerned with the same issue and share the same opinion, they are encouraged to select a spokesperson to represent the group. The board reserves the right to limit repetitive comments.
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.
6. Stakeholders presenting highly detailed or complex information are asked to provide a written outline of their comments for the board members.
7. In order to maintain appropriate meeting decorum, follow appropriate protocols, protect the confidentiality of students, and ensure the impartiality of the board, the board will not entertain comments on matters involving individual students, parents or the character, professional competence, or the physical or mental health of an individual. The board will

not take public comment on personnel matters that specifically include the names or titles of employees; this includes but is not limited to: contract non renewals, position abolishment, the hiring or firing of staff, and investigative proceedings regarding allegations of misconduct. Communications regarding personnel issues should be sent in writing to: Atlanta Board of Education, 130 Trinity Ave, Atlanta, Georgia 30303 or via email at boardcomments@atlantapublicschools.us

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. Those wishing to display place cards, signs and/or banners must remain behind the seating area, or on the side of the seating area, and may not block any attendee's view of the proceedings. Place cards, signs and banners may not have wooden or metal sticks or poles attached to them.
9. 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 will be 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.

D. Executive (Closed) Sessions

1. Closed sessions shall be held pursuant to the Georgia Open Meetings Act and board policy BC Board Meetings.
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.

Last Revised: 11/2/2015

Date Adopted: 7/9/2012

See the statutory charter of the Atlanta Public Schools.

See also:

BC Board Meetings

[O.C.G.A. 50-18-0071 Right of access; timing; fees; denial of requests; impact of electronic records](#)

[O.C.G.A. 50-18-0073 Jurisdiction to enforce article; attorney's fees and litigation expenses; good faith reliance](#)

[O.C.G.A. 50-18-0074 Penalty for violations of Open Records Act; prosecution proceedings](#)

Keywords:

board work sessions, public hearings, public comments, community, public input

