

Wood Charter School Board Policy	Allowances for public comment and written documentation at School Board Meetings	Policy #0015
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Allowances For Public Comment and Written Documentation at School Board Meetings Policy

Background:

Woods Charter School conducts its School Board Meetings in conformance to the North Carolina Open Meetings Law (N.C. Statutes: Article 33C) (hereinafter referred to as “Open Meetings Law”). The Open Meetings Law, however, does not give members of the public the automatic right to speak or participate in an official meeting. In fact, if a person interrupts, disturbs, or disrupts an official meeting, the presiding officer may direct that person to leave the meeting. If that happens and the disruptive person refuses to leave, he may be charged with a misdemeanor. N.C.G.S. § 143-318.17.

Woods Charter School, however, in the spirit of community involvement has made provisions for public comment. This policy describes how public comment will be allowed and how any related documentation will be handled.

Section 1: Public Comment During the Portion of the Agenda Identified as “Public Comment”.

Prior to the start of the School Board Meeting, a form will be available for the public to sign up for public comment during a specific portion of the meeting identified as Public Comment.

Individuals interested in providing public comment will indicate their name and the general nature of what such person desires to say.

The School Board will proceed down the list from top to bottom, if there is more than one person signed up to speak.

Only persons who have signed up to speak prior to the start of the School Board Meeting will be allowed to speak.

Each person will be allowed a total of three (3) minutes to speak about the topic they have identified.

If a person does not utilize their entire allotted time of three (3) minutes, they may not transfer any remaining time to another individual that is signed up to speak.

No person will be allowed to speak more than once during such portion of the agenda.

A total of twelve (12) minutes will be allowed for all people to speak during this portion of the agenda; after such time, the meeting will proceed as scheduled.

At the discretion of the presiding officer, an allowance for further public comment shall be made in which case a person who raises their hand and is acknowledged by the presiding officer will be allowed up to three (3) minutes to speak; they may only speak once during such extended discussion segment; they may not transfer any remaining time to another individual; a total of twelve (12) minutes will be allotted for all speakers during this discretionary extension.

Section 2. Public Comment after Board Discussion on New Business Matters.

After the School Board discusses a particular New Business matter (i.e., not after the Consent Agenda), time will be allowed for public comment.

Each person who raises a hand and is acknowledged by the presiding officer will have up to two (2) minutes to provide public comment on the matter at hand.

If a person does not utilize their entire allotted time of two (2) minutes, they may not transfer any remaining time to another individual.

No person will be allowed to speak more than once regarding each matter.

A total of six (6) minutes will be allowed for people to speak during this portion of the agenda; after such time, the meeting will proceed as scheduled.

At its discretion, the School Board may have further discussion amongst itself upon the matter.

Additionally, at the discretion of the presiding officer, an allowance for further public comment shall be made in which case a person who raises their hand and is acknowledged by the presiding officer will be allowed up to two (2) minutes to speak; they may only speak once during such extended discussion segment; they may not transfer any remaining time to another individual; a total of six (6) minutes will be allotted for all speakers during this discretionary extension.

Section 3. Written Comments Provided by the Public.

If a person provides a written copy of their public comment, they may request that it be included in the Public Comment Binder.

Such Public Comment Binder will be available for review by the public.

At the request of the presiding officer, the person submitting written information for inclusion in the Public Comment Binder will remove any language that is deemed by the presiding officer to be of a nature that is non-factual, speculative, mentions a person by name in a way that is non-factual, or uses offensive or threatening language.

If the person submitting the information refuses to remove such language, such person may choose to not include the submission at all, or the presiding officer will have the authority to redact such information prior to the inclusion of the material in the Public Comment Binder.

Atypically, certain written information provided by the public may be deemed by the School Board to be of such nature as to warrant its inclusion in the Minutes of the School Board Meeting. In such event, at the request of a School Board Member, a portion of the written material identified by such person shall be included in the meeting Minutes.

Enacted by: _____

Title: _____

Witnessed by: _____

Title: _____

Date witnessed: _____

Date Adopted: