

The Cherokee County Board of Education welcomes visitors at its meetings in order to hear any interested citizen of the School District pursuant to the guidelines outlined in this policy.

Public Participation Session

As a part of the regularly-scheduled monthly School Board meeting an Open Session not to exceed 30 minutes (which may be extended by majority vote of the School Board) will be conducted to hear from any interested citizen and/or student or employee of the School District.

Procedures for Speaking Before the School Board during the Public Participation Session

Individuals desiring to appear before the School Board must first complete a sign-in questionnaire which will be available prior to the meeting. The questionnaire is intended to record the speaker's name, address, email address, phone number and other information to allow the School District to follow up with the speaker, if necessary. The Superintendent of School's designee will provide the questionnaire to prospective speakers and be available to answer questions regarding procedures. Any materials the speaker desires the School Board to receive related to his/her remarks will be given to the Superintendent's designee at this time for distribution to the School Board.

Speakers will be called to speak randomly by the Chair and receive three minutes to speak before the School Board. The total time allocated for the Public Participation Session will not exceed 30 minutes. The Chair may equally vary the individual speaker's allocated time in order to as allow as many speakers as possible during the 30-minute session. Speakers may not gain an additional opportunity to speak by reserving or dividing their allotted time for another speaking occasion and may not pass their allotted time to other speakers. The Chair will ask the Superintendent to designate an official timekeeper.

Speakers should conduct themselves professionally. The School Board will not allow comments determined to be disruptive. Comments from the floor will not be recognized. Any persons creating a disruption may be asked to leave the meeting. Public comments that are obscene, profane or vulgar will not be allowed. Speakers determined to be disruptive by the Board Chair may be removed from the meeting after one warning.

If appropriate, the Superintendent will have a response communicated to the speaker.

Agenda Item Participation

Citizens and/or employees may sign up to address the School Board regarding any pending agenda item. When the agenda item is reached, the Chair will first entertain a motion followed by a second regarding the agenda item. The Chair will then solicit question and comments by members of the School Board. Unless the motion and second made are to table the agenda item, the Chair will then recognize the audience member to address the School Board for no more than three minutes. The Chair may limit the allocated time depending upon the number of audience members wishing to participate. In no event will Agenda Item Participation exceed 30 minutes.

Prohibited Discussion Topics

Public Participation and Agenda Item Participation Speakers may not address the following topics which are excluded by the Open Meetings Act (O.C.G.A. §§ 50-14-1 et seq.) or cause disruption. This includes, but may not be limited to, certain land, legal, student disciplinary or personnel items.

1. Real property acquisitions
2. Attorney/Client Privilege
3. Personnel or employees: because of the potential to disrupt a public meeting, speakers may not make unsubstantiated claims regarding a specific or identifiable employee or official.
4. Specific students: (See, for example, Family and Educational Rights Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1232g).

In addition, the following rules will be followed when appearing before the School Board.

1. The speaker will state his/her name and address (address only if response requested).
2. All remarks will be made to the School Board as a body and not to an individual School Board member.
3. The Board Chair or a majority of the School Board present may terminate public comments that are obscene, profane or vulgar.
4. No person will be allowed to disrupt or interfere with procedures.
5. Remarks will end when the speaker's allotted time has expired.
6. Questions from School Board members or the Superintendent may be asked for clarification; however, no person from the floor will be permitted to enter into any discussion either directly or through any member of the School Board.

Any person who willfully violates these guidelines may forfeit the remainder of his/her speaking time.

ADOPTED: August 2, 2001

REVISED: July 21, 2022

Cherokee County Board of Education