



**Frederick County Public Schools**  
**Board of Education**  
**MEETINGS**  
**Policy 102**

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**A. Policy Purpose**

To establish a policy that governs the framework for meeting structures and public engagement, balancing the need of the Board of Education (Board) to preserve the orderly transaction of business with the receipt of effective, efficient, and responsible community input on educational issues during regular meetings of the Board.

**B. Definitions**

1. “Meeting” is defined as meeting in person or virtually in accordance with safety mandates and in compliance with the provisions of the Maryland Open Meetings Act.
2. “Student” is defined as any enrolled Frederick County Public School (FCPS) student regardless of age or any individual who is of school age regardless of enrollment status.

**C. Policy Statement**

1. The Board values the importance of keeping the public apprised on matters of educational interest during its regular meetings.
2. The Board is committed to providing the opportunity for community and student input by including public comment periods during Board hearings and by use of other forums for receiving feedback. This commitment ensures that individuals and groups are afforded the opportunity to express their views on matters of educational interest to the Board and to the community.
3. The Board is committed to ensuring compliance with provisions of the Open Meetings Act.

**D. Implementation**

1. **Public Meetings**
  - a. The Board will meet a minimum of one or two times per month to conduct business.
  - b. Each December, the Board will adopt a meeting schedule for the upcoming school year. The Board may also hold special meetings as required. Special meetings shall be called by the president and secretary or by a majority of the Board.
  - c. All business shall be conducted in meetings open to the public, except for matters that may be conducted in closed session in accordance with Maryland law.
  - d. To ensure safe and orderly conduct at its meetings, the Board may elect to have security personnel present at its meetings as it deems necessary.

- e. Interpreters will be provided for Board meetings upon request for those who are hearing impaired or speakers of languages other than English. A request for an interpreter should be submitted to the Board's Executive Assistant at least ten (10) business days prior to the meeting date or at least five (5) business days prior to the meeting date for a Spanish-language interpreter. Requests for an interpreter, including those by individuals seeking to present during the public comment period, will be accommodated to the extent possible.

## 2. Meetings Format

- a. It is an expectation that Board members be present at scheduled meetings. However, exceptions may be made to allow a Board member to be present via a conference call or video conference. When the Board member participates electronically, the member will be considered present and counted as present for purposes of convening a quorum.
- b. The Board's executive assistant will document it in the minutes when members participate in the meeting electronically.

## 3. Regular Meeting Agenda

- a. In accordance with provisions as outlined in (b) of this section, the Superintendent shall prepare an agenda for each meeting after consultation with the Board. Agenda items shall include matters proposed by the Superintendent, as well as issues of concern to the Board.
- b. The agenda shall be distributed to Board members, the public, staff and the media in advance in accordance with Maryland law. The Board will endeavor to make the agenda as accessible as possible for the public.
- c. The Board shall set aside time during each meeting for open discussion and prioritization of potential future agenda items. An item shall be placed on the list of future agenda topics if at least three members of the Board agree to include that item.
- d. The published meeting agenda will identify the anticipated date and start time for the meeting and, if the meeting will be held virtually, the link for the meeting.
- e. The Board will use the following agenda format as a guideline for its evening meeting, reserving the right to alter as the needs of the Board require:
  - i. Call to Order
  - ii. Pledge of Allegiance
  - iii. Closed Session Announcement
  - iv. Approval of Minutes
  - v. Public Comment Period
    - 1. Student Comments
    - 2. Public Comments
  - vi. Student Member Comments
  - vii. Superintendent Comments
  - viii. Board Comments
  - ix. Board Items
    - 1. Business
    - 2. Policy
    - 3. Strategic Plan
  - x. Action Items/Consent

- xi. Setting Future Meeting Agenda
- xii. Committee Reports/Legislative Update
- xiii. Quarterly Agenda for Board Meetings
- xiv. Adjournment

#### 4. **Conduct of Meetings**

- a. All Board meetings will be conducted in an orderly and businesslike manner using *Roberts Rules of Order (Revised)* as a guide, except when such rules are superseded by Board policy or Maryland law.
- b. Four members of the Board shall constitute a quorum. Motions or resolutions may be adopted only with the concurrence of an absolute majority (four votes) of the Board. In the event there is a disqualification of one or more members because of a conflict of interest, and the disqualification results in less than a quorum, the disqualified person(s) shall disclose the nature and circumstances of the conflict to the Board and may subsequently participate if necessary to take public action on the item.

#### 5. **Public Comment**

- a. The Board views public comment as an opportunity to hear concerns of the public, with the understanding and expectation that it is not considered a question and answer platform with Board members. Consequently, the Board will not provide a response to public comment presented in its meeting or by submission of a written comment, although it may follow-up with the individual as may be appropriate.
- b. Public comment will be received by the Board on issues relating to the school system, except those that pertain to individual personnel issues, complaints identifying individual students, matters that are on appeal, or advertising or solicitations for products or services. If individuals have specific concerns relating to actions of staff members, such concerns may be communicated to the Superintendent.
- c. **Allocated Public Comment Time**
  - i. The Board will provide a maximum of 60 minutes for public comment at its meeting - 15 minutes for student comments and 45 minutes for general public comments.
  - ii. There is also an opportunity for public comment prior to the vote on any action item on the agenda, which shall be announced at each meeting.
  - iii. There will be no additional time added for public comment at the end of Board meetings.
- d. **Pre-Registration.** For those persons wishing to speak, the Board will provide the opportunity to pre-register for public comment. The window to pre-register will open five (5) days in advance of each scheduled Board meeting concurrent with the public posting of the meeting agenda and will close two (2) days before the scheduled Board meeting. A person wishing to speak may pre-register by completing the form on the Board's website or by calling (301) 696-6965 and shall provide the following information:
  - i. Name and contact information (telephone number, e-mail address, and zip code),<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The submitted contact information will be maintained confidentially by the Board and will not be released except as required by law. The zip code may be used by the Board for data analysis, but will not be a factor in determining eligibility to provide public comment.

- ii. Whether the speaker is a student,
  - iii. The topic(s) to be discussed, and
  - iv. Whether an interpreter or accommodation is requested with information regarding the specific need.
- e. **Same-Day/Walk-In Registration.** For those persons wishing to speak who do not pre-register, the Board will provide the opportunity to sign-up for public comment thirty (30) minutes prior to the start of the regular evening meeting. Speakers will be asked to provide the same information as those who pre-register by completing the registration form electronically on a device that will be made available by the Board for such purpose. Registration will close no later than five (5) minutes before the start of the meeting.
- f. **Allotment of Public Comment Slots**
- i. In order to have an orderly presentation of comments by the public and to maximize the opportunity for public comment, students, individuals and organization representatives shall be limited to three (3) minutes for their public comment. Staff monitors time through use of a timer. When the allotted time expires, the speaker is permitted to complete a sentence. The speaker must then return to the audience.
  - ii. The following will guide the assignment for all available public comment speaker slots.
    - 1. Ten (10) general public comment speaker slots shall be reserved for speakers who pre-register. If less than ten (10) individuals pre-register to speak on Board agenda items, the remaining time will be allocated to same-day/walk-in public comments.
    - 2. Five (5) general public comment slots shall be reserved for same-day/walk-in public comments.
    - 3. Five (5) public comment slots shall be reserved for students. If the student comment period is not fully exhausted, any remaining time will be allocated to same-day/walk-in public comments.
  - iii. **Selection Process**
    - 1. Slots will be allocated on a first-come, first-serve basis.
    - 2. If the number of individuals who request to speak exceeds available slots, and to ensure equity of access and opportunity for public comment, speakers who have spoken at the most recent previous Board meeting will be rotated to the bottom of the sign-up list as to not unduly favor when an individual signs up.
    - 3. Students shall not be selected for a general public comment slot unless all of the student public comment slots are filled and all pre-registered and same day/walk-in public speaker slots are exhausted.
  - iv. **Notification**
    - 1. The day prior to each identified Board meeting, individuals who were allocated a confirmed slot will be notified via email and asked to confirm their availability.
    - 2. The day prior to each identified Board meeting, individuals who were **not** allocated a public comment slot will be notified via email and reminded about the opportunity to submit written comments for the meeting record and about the opportunity to sign-up for same-day/walk-in public comment during the public comment period and in connection with action items.

- g. **Written Comments.** Individuals are provided the opportunity to and encouraged to submit written comments electronically and email them to the address indicated on the Board’s website (<https://www.fcps.org/boe/meeting-schedule>). Written comments must be submitted as a PDF attachment (strongly preferred) or a Microsoft Word document with the .doc or .docx extension and will be uploaded to BoardDocs as part of the official meeting record. Comments in the body of an e-mail will not be accepted.
- h. **Disruptive Conduct**
  - i. If any individual fails to comply with these procedures, the Board president may order the person to leave the public meeting, adjourn the meeting, or may take such further action as necessary to ensure compliance with these procedures.
  - ii. Visual demonstrations such as the waiving of placards, signs, or banners, or other behavior may not obstruct the view of audience members and may be restricted at the discretion of the Board if the visual demonstration results in disruption of the meeting or interferes with the rights of others to attend and observe the meeting.

**6. Annual Evaluation and Retreat**

- a. The Board shall hold a separate meeting each year, at a time and place to be determined by the Board, for the purpose of self-evaluation.
- b. During this meeting, the Board will evaluate its own performance for the prior year, and will discuss strategies to improve the effectiveness of the Board.

**7. Community Listening Sessions**

- a. The Board will develop a schedule for “Community Listening Sessions”. Community Listening Sessions are informal meetings at which no Board business will be conducted other than to provide the public with an opportunity to provide comment on matters of educational interest.
- b. These Community Listening Sessions will be held no less frequently than three (3) times per year.
- c. The informal structure of the Community Listening Session will allow the community to highlight areas of celebration and areas of advocacy or concern that allow for dialogue and communication between a wide range of families and across all communities.

**8. Joint Meetings of the Board**

To facilitate communication and promote strong relationships with funding authorities, other governmental units and educational agencies, the Board shall schedule meetings accordingly to discuss items of mutual concern.

**9. Open Meetings Act**

The Board complies with Maryland law as it relates to meeting structure and required training requirements of the Maryland Open Meetings Act.

**E. Related Information**

Md. Education Code Ann. § 3-5B-04

Md. General Provisions Ann. §§ 3-101, *et. seq.*

COMAR 13A.02.01.01, *Rules for Meetings*

[Open Meetings Act Manual, Office of the Maryland Attorney General, Eleventh Ed. \(Oct. 2022\)](#)

**F. Policy History** (Maintained by Legal Services)

<i>Responsible Office</i>	Board of Education of Frederick County
<i>Related Regulations</i>	None
Adoption Dates	03/10/10
Review Dates	2017, 2019, 2020, 2023
Revision Dates	11/11/20, 07/12/23