

# **WASHINGTON COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION**

## **GUIDELINES FOR PUBLIC COMMENT**

**January 1, 2026**

The Washington County Board of Education encourages all citizens to attend our meetings. We welcome public comment and designate a time for this on each agenda. The following statements of expected behavior outline rules for decorum and participation, ensuring an orderly and respectful environment for official business.

### **Follow Proper Channels for Resolution of Issues**

- The Board of Education is a policy body that executes specifically defined legal requirements. Concerns regarding school or district operations should be directed to the appropriate administrator. If clarity is not achieved at that level, please contact the Superintendent, who has responsibility for all operational matters.

### **Key Behavioral Expectations**

- **Courteous and Respectful Conduct:** All speakers and attendees are expected to act with civility and extend courtesy to board members and other speakers.
- **Address the Presiding Officer:** Comments must be directed to the Board Chair, not to individual board members, staff, or the audience.
- **Adhere to Time Constraints:** Speakers should be clear and succinct. Speaking for 2 or 3 minutes should be sufficient. If a speaker exceeds a reasonable amount of time, the Board Chair will intervene.
- **Focus on Relevant Topics:** Comments should be confined to matters within the board's jurisdiction. Comments about individual students, individual employees, board members, or other named persons will not be permitted during public comment due to privacy and due process rights.
- **Avoid Disruptive Behavior:** Prohibited actions include:
  - Using vulgar, obscene, or defamatory language.
  - Engaging in personal attacks or insults.

- Open debate, commentary, or discussion between individuals during the public comment period.
- Shouting, interrupting, or making other sounds (like booing or clapping) that disrupt the meeting.
- The display of signs or posters.
- **No Debate or Dialogue:** The public comment period is a one-way communication channel to the board; board members listen but will not engage in dialogue, answer questions, or debate the speaker during this time. If requested by the Board Chair, the Superintendent will contact the speaker(s) after the meeting with any required follow-up.

- **Enforcement**

The Board Chair is responsible for maintaining order during meetings and will enforce these expectations. Individuals who disrupt the meeting or violate decorum may be ruled out of order, have their speaking time terminated, and, if the behavior continues after a warning, may be asked or required to leave the premises by law enforcement.