

Southwest Georgia S.T.E.M. Charter School
Policy B3: Conduct of Board Meetings - Public Comment
Adopted: April 18, 2022

Conduct of Board Meetings

I. Board Meeting Agendas

An agenda together with accompanying information shall be sent to each member of the Board by the School Leader three business days preceding the Board meeting. This agenda, upon approval at the beginning of each meeting, shall govern the order of business for the meeting. Additions, deletions, or amendments to the approved agenda shall be made by a majority vote of the Board.

Citizens of the community have the right and are encouraged to attend meetings of the Board to listen to and observe the deliberations of its members. The following regulations are adopted to preserve the orderly pursuit of business of the Board and to provide proper opportunities for legitimate and objective discussion and analysis of the issues presented. Board meetings are public meetings and not meetings of the public; however, any citizen may request the opportunity to communicate with the Board and be recognized to speak regarding appropriate issues.

Notwithstanding any provision contained in this policy, meetings of the Southwest Georgia S.T.E.M. Charter School are not open forums and shall be limited to those matters pertaining to the operation and function of the School. Nothing in this policy shall provide any individual any right to make a presentation to the Board that is irrelevant or unrelated to the School; or is unduly repetitious. While the chair may not stop the speaker because the chair or members of the Board disagree with his/her viewpoint, the speaker may be stopped if his/her presentation becomes irrelevant, or unduly repetitious.

Members of the public are reminded that matters concerning an individual student, employee or other items of a person nature may first be discussed first with the School Leader. Certified employees may use the School's Complaints and Grievances policy to address employment concerns. Members of the public are further reminded of student privacy and confidentiality provisions and encouraged to use private procedures to discuss concerns involving students

Persons desiring to communicate with the Board shall submit a written request to the School Leader's Office stating their name, home address, the topic about which they wish to speak and the group they represent, if applicable, no later than 24 hours prior to a scheduled Board meeting.

Following the approval of the minutes of the previous meeting, there shall be an agenda item entitled "speaker appearances." This agenda item shall contain a list of those individuals who have requested at least twenty four hours in advance of the meeting that their names be placed on the agenda. Following presentations by those on the agenda, the chairperson shall recognize those who wish to speak on a specific agenda item and have completed a speaker appearance form.

Individuals who have submitted a written request to appear before the Board prior to the meeting shall be allowed to address the Board for 10 minutes. – If there are numerous requests to address the Board on the same topic, the chairperson may limit the number of speakers based on the date the request was submitted. The Board also vests in its chairperson or other presiding officer with the authority to terminate the remarks of any individual who does not adhere to the guidelines established by the Board.

At the beginning of each meeting, individuals who wish to address a specific agenda item shall complete a speaker appearance form. The speaker appearance form will be provided by the School Leader or the School Leader designee who shall be available to answer any questions regarding procedures for addressing the Board. Speakers who wish to address a specific agenda item shall be given three to five minutes to make their remarks. The time per speaker shall be determined by the chairperson, depending on the number of speakers and topics.

Prior to any statement or presentation to the Board, each speaker shall state his/her name and shall provide his/her address. Each speaker shall comply with the following restrictions:

1. No person shall be allowed to make obscene, derogatory, or slanderous remarks that disrupt the orderly conduct of the meeting.
2. No person shall disrupt the meeting or interfere in any way with the orderly conduct of the meeting.
3. Remarks shall end when a speaker's allotted time has expired.
4. Speakers may respond to questions from Board members and/or the School Leader should clarification be necessary. Provided, however, no person shall be permitted to enter into discussion with a Board member or any member of the School staff during the conduct of a meeting. The Board will take all comments and questions under advisement. When appropriate, the comments and questions shall be referred to the School Leader for consideration and a later response. Board Members and speakers are reminded that while the content of their address is message is in no way restricted, speakers should be mindful of their speech and consider potential slanderous or confidential aspects of their remarks.
5. Supporting documents or information to be shared with the Board must be provided in hard copy. Eight copies should be provided and should be presented to the School Leader for distribution to the Board members. Audiovisual presentations are discouraged and may not be accommodated due to time and technical considerations

Any person who willfully violates these rules shall be prohibited from appearing before the Board for a period of 60 days.

II. **Availability of Agenda**

Prior to any meeting of the Board, the Board shall make available an agenda of all matters expected to come before the Board at such meeting. The agenda shall be available upon request and shall be posted at the meeting site as far in advance of the meeting as reasonably possible,

but shall not be required to be available more than two weeks prior to the meeting and shall be posted at a minimum at some time during the two-week period immediately prior to the meeting. Failure to include on the agenda an item which becomes necessary to address during the course of the meeting shall not preclude consideration of and action upon such item. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the agenda will be posted and made available no later than three business days prior to the meeting of the Board. All accompanying documents and supplements to the agenda shall be made available for public inspection.

III. Executive Session

Georgia law requires that following any executive session the Chairman or other presiding officer execute and file with the official minutes of the meeting a notarized affidavit stating under oath that the subject matter of the meeting or the closed portion thereof was devoted to matters within the exceptions provided by law and identifying the specific relevant exception. Thus, the Chairman or other presiding officer shall, at the conclusion of each meeting where at least a portion was closed, complete and sign the Board's approved affidavit.

IV. School Board Records

All official records of the Board shall be kept and safeguarded by the Superintendent who shall also be responsible for the safekeeping of all official papers, including titles, contracts, obligations, and other documents which belong to the Board or pertain to its business. The official minutes of the Board, its written policies, and its financial records shall be open for the inspection of any citizen desiring to examine them during hours when the office of the Superintendent is open. However, no records pertaining to individual students protected by the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act shall be released for inspection by the public or any unauthorized persons, either by the Superintendent or other persons responsible for the custody of confidential files.

Records Retention Program

A record management program as provided for in the Georgia Records Act of 1972, as amended, shall be established and implemented. A records management officer shall be appointed to direct and coordinate the implementation of this act. An inventory of all records, including electronic records, shall be made, a record retention schedule shall be developed and procedures for storage, retrieval, and the prevention of routine destruction of records subject to a litigation hold, shall be established.

Records Access Process

The Superintendent shall develop a process whereby records subject to Georgia's Open Records Act are made available upon written request in accordance with the Act and at the time provided by the Act.