

**Section 2-8.1. Early Appearances; Suffolk Community Defined; Five Minutes and not less than Three Minutes for Presentation; When More than Fifteen Speakers. —**

~~A. Members of the community are invited and encouraged to attend meetings of the Suffolk School Board to observe its deliberations. Any Members of the community public may are address the School Board invited to attend and encouraged to observe any open meeting of the School Board, including meetings held by Committees of the School Board, on matters relating to Suffolk Public Schools at any regular meeting of the School Board. At any regular meeting of the School Board open to the general public, any member of the Suffolk Community may address the School Board on matters pertaining to services, policies and affairs relating to the School Board or Suffolk Public Schools, or they may submit their remarks in writing to the Clerk of the School Board. The agenda item entitled “Early Appearances” pertains to those items listed on the School Board agenda for which no public hearing has been scheduled and members of the public Suffolk Community have expressed a desire to publicly express their views. The total amount of time set aside during the public meeting of the School Board for Early Appearances shall be limited to a total of forty-five (45) minutes.~~

The “Early Appearance” and “Late Appearance” portion of the meeting of the School Board is considered a limited public forum. Members of the Suffolk Community are afforded an opportunity to state any specific concerns they may have regarding services, policies, and affairs relating to the School Board or Suffolk Public Schools. Expressive activities that will disrupt the orderly conduct of the meeting are not permitted. Expressive activities, whether religious or secular, include, but are not limited to the following, petitioning, picketing, displaying signs or posters, solicitation, demonstrating, pamphlet distribution, and conducting polls. By its adoption of this policy it is not the intent of the School Board to substantially burden, inhibit or curtail any religiously motivated practice that is allowed under Virginia Code Section 57-2.02. Members of the public will have the opportunity to meditate, pray, or engage in any other silent activity that will not disrupt the orderly conduct of any meeting of the School Board. Any member of the Suffolk Community who would like to appear and speak before the School Board are required to complete the online Request to Speak form and submit the completed form to the clerk of the School Board.

B. The term member of the Suffolk Community includes any: (1) person residing in the City of Suffolk; (2) parent or legal guardian of a child enrolled in Suffolk Public Schools; (3) business owner licensed to conduct business in the City of Suffolk; (4) person who owns real property in the City of Suffolk; (5) employee of Suffolk Public Schools; and (6) student enrolled in Suffolk Public Schools.

B. Each person participating under this agenda item shall be permitted no more than five (5) minutes and no less than three (3) minutes for the purpose of presenting their views. Presentations shall be addressed to the entire School Board, rather than to an individual School Board member. Individuals shall not be allowed to give all or part of their five minutes to other speakers. The chair is responsible for the orderly conduct of the meeting and shall rule on such matters as the appropriateness of the subject being presented and length of time for such presentation. At the conclusion of a speaker’s

remarks, any member of the School Board who desires further information, is allowed to address the speaker but only with permission of the chair.

C. If there are more than fifteen (15) persons to be heard under this agenda item, the first fifteen (15) who notified the Clerk of the School Board of their desire to speak before the School Board as required by Board Policy Section 10-5.1 will be allowed three (3) minutes each to make their presentation. When fifteen (15) speakers have spoken or when the forty-five (45) minutes allotted for Early Appearances has expired, any remaining speakers who expressed an interest in speaking under the agenda item entitled "Early Appearances" will be allowed to speak under the agenda item entitled "Late Appearances" or they may submit their remarks in writing to the Clerk of the School Board to be read during Late Appearances. Any person desiring to be heard under "Early Appearances" must notify **complete the online Request to Speak form and forward to** the Clerk of the School Board after the release of the regular meeting agenda to the public, but no later than 12:00 noon on Wednesday preceding the day of the regular School Board meeting. (Adopted: October 13, 2005; Ordinance Number 05/06-2, Effective Date: January 1, 2006; Adopted September 8, 2016; Ordinance Number 16/17-5; Effective Date: July 1, 2017; Ordinance 20/21-10: Revised January 14, 2021)

**Legal Authority** – Virginia Code §22.1-78 (1950), as amended.