

School Board Public Participation Policy

Policy Title: Public Participation in School Board Meetings

Effective Date: January 1, 2026

Purpose

The School Board (hereinafter "the Board") of Hillsboro Christian Academy (HCA), a K-12 Christian school committed to fostering a Christ-centered educational environment, recognizes the value of community input in advancing our mission to nurture students in faith, knowledge, and character. This policy establishes guidelines for public participation during Board meetings to ensure orderly proceedings, respectful dialogue, and alignment with our Christian values of love, humility, and mutual edification (Ephesians 4:2-3). Public participation provides an opportunity for stakeholders to share insights, concerns, or suggestions related to school policies, programs, and operations, while allowing the Board to focus on its governance responsibilities.

This policy promotes transparency without compromising the Board's ability to conduct business efficiently.

Eligibility for Participation

Public participation is open to:

- Parents or legal guardians of enrolled students, school staff and faculty, and volunteers.
- Members of the broader community who have a direct interest in the school's mission and operations.
- Students (with parental accompaniment if under 18), provided their comments align with the guidelines below.

Individuals must identify themselves by name and affiliation (e.g., parent, community member) when speaking. Anonymous participation is not permitted.

Procedures for Participation

1. **Meeting Schedule:** Board meetings are held the second Monday of each month at 6 pm unless otherwise announced via the school website, newsletter, or bulletin boards.
2. **Sign-Up Process:**
 - Participants must sign up in advance by submitting a request form (available on the school website or at the school office) no later than the Friday prior to the scheduled meeting. The form shall include the speaker's name, connection to the school (parent, student, employee of the school), contact information, and a brief description of the topic.
 - Priority is given to topics on the current agenda, followed by general school-related matters.

3. **Allocation of Time:**
 - A dedicated public comment period will occur early in the meeting agenda, lasting up to 30 minutes total.
 - Each speaker is limited to 3 minutes to ensure equitable participation. Time may be adjusted by the Board Chair based on the number of speakers.
 - If time constraints arise, the Board may defer comments to a future meeting or request written submissions.
4. **Written Submissions:** Individuals unable to speak or preferring not to may submit written comments via email to board@hcaoh.org or dropped off to the school office. Written submissions must be received no later than the Friday prior to the scheduled meeting. These will be reviewed by the Board and acknowledged as appropriate.

Guidelines for Comments

- **Relevance:** Comments must pertain to school policies, programs, operations, or matters under the Board's purview.
- **Christian Conduct:** All participants are expected to communicate in a manner that reflects Christ's teachings—respectful, truthful, and edifying. Profanity, threats, personal attacks, or divisive language will not be tolerated. Speakers should aim to build up the community rather than tear down (Colossians 4:6).
- **No Debate or Response:** Public comment is for input only; the Board will not engage in dialogue or provide immediate responses during this period. Follow-up may occur at the Board's discretion via subsequent communication.
- **Special Accommodations:** Requests for accommodations should be made in advance to ensure inclusivity.

Enforcement and Consequences

- The Board President or designee will preside over the public comment period and enforce these guidelines.
- Disruptive behavior may result in a warning, removal from the meeting, or restriction from future participation. Repeated violations could lead to a temporary ban from Board meetings, determined by a Board vote.
- The Board reserves the right to amend this policy as needed, with notice provided to the community.
- By adopting this policy, the Board reaffirms its commitment to a collaborative, faith-based community where all voices are heard in a spirit of unity and respect.