

# **Pataula Charter Academy, Inc.**

## **Public Participation at Governing Board or Committee Meetings Policy**

### **Purpose:**

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for members of the public attending or planning to speak before The Board or any Standing Board Committee as well as establish a level of safety and decorum in the Board Room for any such participation.

### **Policy Statement:**

The Board, recognizing the importance of transparency in its actions, as well as, public participation in helping PCA and SCCA achieve their mission, shall enact the following rules which have been created to facilitate the conduct of public meetings as well as to allow individuals attending or planning to speak before The Board or a Standing Board Committee in an open and orderly manner and in an environment safe for all persons in attendance:

#### **A. Audience Decorum**

1. All persons entering the Board Room may be subject to a search of their person and possessions for weapons and other potentially dangerous, disruptive, or destructive materials as reasonably determined by law enforcement officials.
2. Persons in the audience will refrain from creating, provoking or participating in any type of disturbance involving unwelcome physical contact.
3. Persons in the audience will refrain from behavior that will disrupt the public meeting. This includes making loud noises, clapping, shouting, booing, hissing or engaging in any other activity in a manner that disturbs, disrupts or impedes the orderly conduct of the meeting or impedes the ability of the speaker to be heard by The Board/Committee.
4. Persons in the audience will refrain from using mobile devices, phones, pagers, or other audible electronic or communication devices while the meeting is in session.
5. Signs, posters, banners and/or other display material are prohibited in the Board Room.

#### **B. Safety for Persons and Premises**

Objects that are deemed a threat to the safety of persons at the meeting or the facility infrastructure are not allowed. Persons found in possession of such items prior to admission to the meeting will not be permitted to enter the Board Room. Board Members and Law Enforcement are authorized to remove individuals from the Board Room if a threat exists or is perceived to exist.

Prohibited items include, but are not limited to: firearms (including replicas and antiques), toy guns, explosive material, and ammunition; knives and other edged weapons; illegal drugs and drug paraphernalia; laser pointers, scissors, razors, scalpels, box cutting knives, and other cutting or puncturing tools; letter openers, corkscrews, can openers with points, knitting needles, and hooks; pepper spray, and aerosol or other spray containers; tools; glass containers; paint, and large backpacks and suitcases that are incapable of being opened for examination.

#### **C. Protocol/Decorum For Speakers**

- Speakers must be present when their names are called, and give their name and relation to the school at the beginning of their comments.
- Communication **MUST** be respectful and in a conversational tone at all times. Sharing and granting speaking time to others is not permitted.

- Speakers are cautioned that personally directed statements may be slanderous or defaming, and the individual speaker is liable for his/her statements. In addition, personal attacks, racial slurs, profanity, excessive loudness, generally disruptive behavior, or attempts to incite others to such may be grounds to be asked to leave the meeting.

## **D. Requesting to Speak**

### **1. Public Comment**

At all regular meetings The Board and Board Committees shall allot not more than 30 minutes to hear persons who desire to make Public Comments regarding items that HAVE NOT been listed on the agenda for Formal Appeal, Complaint, or Petition.

Any person planning to address the Board or Board Committee to make such Public Comment shall sign in on the appropriate participation form, available in the Boardroom, at least 5 minutes prior to the beginning of the meeting.

A maximum of 10 speakers will be allowed for the Public Comment portion of each Board or Board Committee Meeting. Speakers will be requested to speak from the participation form on a first come first serve basis.

An individual speaker will be permitted up to three (3) minutes for presentation. This will be strictly adhered to with assistance of a timekeeper. Individuals may not share their allotted time with others.

### **2. Formal Appeals, Complaints, or Petitions**

Any person wishing to speak before The Board for a formal tribunal appeal must follow the steps in the school's Formal Appeals Policy or Tribunal Policy, which can be found in the school handbook and will be given to all parents prior to a tribunal. Any person wishing to speak before the Board or a Board Committee about a Formal Grievance must first go through the proper line of authority as described in the Parent and Student Grievances Policy. The presiding officer shall determine whether the person planning to address the Board or Board Committee for such a matter has first attempted to solve the problem through the appropriate channels.

The Board Chairman or Board Committee Chairman will respond to the person making the request to determine if and when the matter will be heard by the Board in a fair and timely manner. If it has been determined that the individual has not gone through the appropriate resolution channels prior to the request he/she shall be referred to the appropriate policy to seek resolution.

The Board and Board Committees shall allot not more than 30 minutes to hear persons regarding items that HAVE been listed on the agenda for Formal Appeal or Grievance. A maximum of 3 speakers will be allowed for the Formal Appeals and Grievances. Speakers will be requested to speak based on their placement on the Agenda. An individual speaker will be permitted up to ten (10) minutes for presentation. This will be strictly adhered to with assistance of a timekeeper.

## **E. Response to Speakers**

The Board or Standing Board Committee will only receive the public comments presented by the speakers, but will not act on them or their contents at the time they are presented. However, in the event of a formal appeal or complaint that requires action or comment from The Board, the Board Chair will follow up with the speaker on such action in a timely manner.