



Loudoun4All Statement on Changes to Public Comment at LCPS School Board Meetings

Recently, the Loudoun County School Board voted to remove video recording of public commentary during school board meetings. While the audio will still be broadcast, the video will display as a still frame. This vote has drawn immediate outrage from certain politicians, reaching as far as former President Trump. Loudoun4All believes that the “shock” and “outrage” are quite simply feigned.

Public input is crucial. However, allowing school boards to implement rules around public comment periods does NOT infringe on parents’ rights to express their opinions. It ensures that meetings can be conducted in a fair and productive manner, considering the needs of the community. “Small government” conservatives such as Glenn Youngkin and Donald Trump should respect the autonomy of local governing bodies in determining their own processes. It is ironic that the former President is suggesting a meeting at a **private** venue in response to changing guidelines around **public** comment sessions; undermining the principles of transparency and the *very essence* of public governance.

There is a wide range of public comment procedures and policies in school districts across the Commonwealth. Governor Youngkin said the decision to remove video was “stunning,” so we are sure he will also be “stunned” to learn that many do not provide any video recording of meetings *at all*. Loudoun County school board meetings have multiple instances of many hours of public comment. This fact could justify implementing a cap on the number of speakers or the amount of time that public comment is allowed. However, there are currently no limits on public comment. Loudoun4All has researched other public comment policies in other districts in Virginia to compare. You can review our research into public comment policies across Virginia [here](#).

Looking at similarly sized nearby districts, Fairfax County school board meetings accept only sixteen public speakers, while Prince William County school board meetings allow for a maximum of one hour of public comment and thirty speakers. Yet, we have seen no outrage directed at any of the School Boards with far more restrictions on public commentary.

Once again, the outrage is less about the actual policy as compared to the policies of other school districts, and more about faux-outrage for political posturing. This is a change that is NOT outside of the norm for school districts like ours. LCPS continues to offer one of the most open policies for public commentary in Virginia. Loudoun4All calls on the public to ignore this distraction and to focus on real issues that can improve our schools.