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**Governance and Finance: Improve Citizen Engagement and Organizational Responsiveness by Increasing Virtual Meeting Flexibility for School Board Committees**



Current Reality: RCPS is fully committed to transparency, accountability, *and* actively engaging stakeholders. The unnecessarily onerous requirements for Board *Committee* Meetings are an obstacle to ­meaningful participation by the families we serve.

Specifically, all-virtual Committee Meetings should be an opportunity to be responsive and to encourage engagement.  The unnecessarily strict limits on fully online committee meetings severely limit these opportunities.

The Code of Virginia [§2.2-3708.3](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title2.2/chapter37/section2.2-3708.3/) establishes requirements for meetings held through electronic means that include a number of limitations other than in declares states of emergency. In Section D, the same restrictions regarding the number and frequency of all-virtual School Board Meetings are applied to, “a committee, subcommittee, or other entity however designated of the public body to perform delegated functions of the public body or to advise the public body…”

RCPS fully supports the essential need to provide adequate notice and multiple methods for citizens to participate in Board Committee meetings, but limiting the number and frequency of all virtual committee meetings to the same extent as Board meetings is excessive.

For example, issues arise at the start of every school year. Many such issues could benefit from thoughtful consideration by a Board Committee.  Ideally, an all-virtual committee meeting could be scheduled, properly noticed, and convened in a timely manner.  Under the current regulations, however, if the committee's previous meet happened to be online, the effort to be prompt and responsive would be undermined by the requirement that no two online committee meetings be consecutive.

Virtual committee meetings are considerably more convenient for most of the families we serve.  Virtual meetings don't require childcare, permit citizens to choose which parts of the agenda are of interest to them, and just generally increases the number of citizens who will connect and be engaged in the work of the committee.

Additionally, in-person committee meetings can delay engagement and negatively impact responsiveness. All-virtual committee meetings facilitate more responsive governance because they are considerably easier to schedule with involved Board Members who can much more easily carve out an hour to participate remotely from their workplace than they can schedule a half-day off from their jobs to travel, park, meet, depart, return and resume their regular full-time work responsibilities.

RCPS recommends the General Assembly:

Eliminate the existing limits on the number and frequency of all-virtual committee meetings provided that the School Board adopt a policy ensuring that all other meeting notice and access requirements in § 2.2-3708.3 are fulfilled.