

I'm here to talk to you about process, freedom of speech and censorship.

Late last night, Chairman Margiotta invoked BP 1300 to broadly prohibit discussion about the topic of "student assignment."

Policy 1300 G4 authorizes the Chair to prohibit discussion when the SAME issue will be addressed at a future hearing. As indicated by the Board, the issue to be discussed at the January hearings will be a specific reassignment proposal. This proposal has not yet been formulated. People came here tonight wanting to provide input on what that proposal should look like. This is not the same issue that will be addressed in January when the proposal will have already been created.

This prohibition on speech mirrors the exclusionary process that cost the new board members their solid majority. Ms. Goldman was understandably unhappy about her exclusion from the process of creating a new student assignment plan. It was not enough to be allowed to comment on the plan once it was created.

Through the Chair's latest edict, the public, like Ms. Goldman in the past, is being shut out of a crucial stage in the process.

Tonight's censorship is merely the latest in a series of decisions that have whittled away at the public's opportunity to speak.

As Americans, we treasure our right to free speech. Rather than infringing upon that right, engage us in discussion. Support your viewpoint with research data indicating how creating high poverty schools will help student achievement. Explain how Wake County will avoid the fate of Charlotte/Mecklenburg if we continue down this path. Efforts to silence rather than engage opposing viewpoints merely reveal the weakness of your position.