

## PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT BOARD MEETINGS

Board meetings are conducted for the purpose of carrying on the official business of the school system. The public is cordially invited to attend and participate in Board meetings as provided in this policy. All regular, special and emergency meetings of the Board are open to the public.

Although Board meetings are not public forums, the Board will provide appropriate opportunities for citizens to express opinions and concerns related to the matters under consideration by the Board. The intent is to allow a fair and adequate opportunity for the public to be heard and to provide adequate time for the Board to obtain information and opinion on subjects before it, while ensuring that the time allowed for public discussion does not interfere with the fulfillment of the scheduled agenda.

The following guidelines shall apply to public participation at Board meetings.

A. Citizens and employees of the school unit are welcome to participate as provided in this policy. Others may be recognized to speak at the Chair's discretion. Individual employees and/or employee groups will not be permitted to discuss the matters for which complaint or grievance procedures are provided.

B. The Chair may limit the time given to comments on a particular topic as well as the time any individual may speak.

C. In the event of a sizable audience, the Chair may require persons interested in speaking to so indicate by signing up to speak, so they may be called on in a fair and efficient manner.

D. Public comment shall be limited to the item(s) on the agenda. Public participation may be permitted prior to the Board action on agenda items.

E. Members of the public may address the Board within the guidelines provided in this policy. The Chair shall be responsible for maintaining proper order and compliance with these guidelines.

F. All speakers are to address the board Chair and direct questions or comments to Board members or the Superintendent only upon approval of the Chair. Requests for information or concerns that require further research may be referred to the Superintendent to be addressed at a later time.

G. Members of the Board and the Superintendent may ask questions of any person who addresses the Board but are expected to refrain from arguing or debating issues. Questions must be addressed through the Chair.

H. No complaints or allegations will be allowed at Board meetings concerning any person employed by the school system or against particular students. Personal matters or complaints

concerning student or staff issues will not be considered in a public meeting but will be referred through established policies and procedures.

I. In order to make efficient use of meeting time, the Board discourages duplication or repetition of comments to the Board. The Board requests that Groups or organizations be represented by designated spokespersons.

J. The Chair has the authority to stop any presentation that violates these guidelines or the privacy rights of others.

K. Persons who disrupt the meeting may be asked to leave, and the Chair may request law enforcement assistance as necessary to restore order.

An agenda shall be published in advance of each meeting in accordance with Board policy. Copies are to be posted and/or available prior to regular meetings, at the Superintendent's Office and in each school, or other appropriate public facilities. Anyone desiring additional information about any item on the agenda should direct such inquiries to the Office of the Superintendent.

Cross Reference:     BEC - EXECUTIVE SESSION  
                          BEDA - NOTIFICATION OF BOARD MEETINGS  
                          BEDB - AGENDA  
                          BEDD – RULES OF ORDER  
                          BDDE - RULES OF ORDER  
                          KE – PUBLIC CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS

Legal Reference: 1 M.R.S.A. Sec. 401, et seq.

Policy Adopted: 12/75

Policy Reviewed: 9/1/88

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Policy Reviewed: 11/1/99

Policy Amended: 12/20/99

Policy Amended: 8/04