

Public Participation in Board Meetings

All meetings of the Board shall be open to the public. All actions of the Board shall be taken openly and the deliberations leading to Board action shall likewise be conducted openly. The public is invited to attend Board meetings and will be given limited time to voice opinions or problems.

The Board recognizes its responsibility to conduct the business of the district in an orderly and efficient manner and will therefore require reasonable controls to regulate public presentations to the Board. The primary purpose of the meeting is for the Board to conduct its business as charged by the law. Spontaneous discussion, as well as disorder and disruption, prevent the Board from doing its work and will not be permitted. A person wishing to be heard by the Board shall first be recognized by the Chair. He/she shall then identify him/herself and proceed with his/her comments as briefly as the subject permits.

The Chair is responsible for the orderly conduct of the meeting and shall rule on such matters as the time to be allowed for public discussion, the appropriateness of the subject being presented and the suitability of the time for such a presentation. A speaker in violation of these rules may be required to leave in order to permit the orderly consideration of the matters for which the meeting was called. Persons who disrupt the meeting may be asked to leave, and the Chair may request law enforcement assistance as necessary to restore order.

Speakers are asked to observe the following:

1. In the case of a large audience, speakers may be asked to sign up before the meeting so they may be called on most expediently. Speakers may be asked to keep their comments to three minutes.
2. Confidential personnel information will not be shared in a public session. No complaints or allegations will be allowed at Board meetings concerning any person employed by the school system or against particular students. Personnel 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.
3. All speakers are asked to identify themselves. Gossip, defamatory comments, or abusive or vulgar language will not be permitted. **Participation by the public may be through telephonic, video, electronic or similar means (most use Zoom). The person would be expected to identify him/herself just as if at an in-person session.**
4. Speakers must address all comments and questions to the Chair.
5. Comments will be heard and considered. Requests for information or concerns that require further research may be referred to the Superintendent to be addressed at a later time. Generally, the Board does not discuss or act on an item not on the agenda.

6. Speakers are asked not to be repetitious of comments already made to the Board, in the interest of most efficient use of time.
7. The Chair has the authority to stop any presentation that violates these guidelines or the privacy rights of others.
8. Persons wishing to address the Board may be permitted to do so only during the designated time for public comment.

At the discretion of the Chair, a speaker may be recognized for a second time on a particular item. All speakers must observe rules of common etiquette. The Chair may interrupt or terminate an individual's statement when it is too lengthy, personally directed, abusive, obscene, or irrelevant. The Board as a whole will have the final decision in determining the appropriateness of all such rulings.

Copies of the Board of Directors Agenda shall be published in advance of each meeting in accordance with Board policy. Copies will be posted and/or available prior to regular meetings on the district website and at the Superintendent's Office.

Legal Reference: 1 MRSA § 401 et seq.
 20 MRSA §1001(20)

Cross Reference: Policy BEC, Executive Session
 Policy KE-VH, Public Concerns and Complaints

Adopted: January 20, 2021