

### **Public Participation in Board Meetings**

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

Although Board meetings are not public forums, the Board will provide appropriate opportunities for citizens to express opinions and concerns directly related to school operation. The intent is to allow 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.

A time period for comments by visitors at Board Meetings will be scheduled at the beginning of the Board's Agenda. Additional public comments may be entertained at the Board Chairman's discretion throughout the meeting.

The Board will give due attention to comments and contributions, but will not be required to respond or take immediate action. Comments/questions will be taken under advisement.

Inquiries, other than simple questions, shall be referred to the Superintendent who shall investigate or consider the matter and report to the Board. If Board action is indicated, the item will be included in the next regular meeting agenda.

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

- A. Citizens and employees of the District with a legitimate interest in the Board's business are welcome to participate as provided in this policy. Others may be recognized to speak at the Chair's discretion. No one will be permitted to discuss matters for which other, more appropriate forums are provided.
- B. The Chair may limit the time allotted for comments on a particular topic as well as the time each individual may speak.

- C. All speakers must identify themselves by name and town of residence as they begin talking.
- D. Speakers are not permitted to make defamatory comments, or use abusive or vulgar language.
- E. All speakers are to address questions and comments to the Chair. Specific questions or comments to particular Board members or the Superintendent will be made at the discretion of the Chair. Requests for information or concerns that require further research may be referred and addressed at the next scheduled Board meeting.
- F. All questions from members of the Board and the Superintendent of any person who addresses the Board must be addressed through the Chair. There will be no debating or arguing of positions.
- G. No complaints or allegations will be allowed at Board meetings concerning any person employed by the District 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 to the administration or the Board Chair for resolution as appropriate.
- H. In order to make efficient use of meeting time, the Board discourages duplication or repetition of comments. The Board requests that groups or organizations be represented by designated spokespersons.
- I. The Chair has the authority to stop any presentation that violates these guidelines or the privacy rights of others.
- J. 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 posted on the district's website\* in advance of each meeting in accordance with Board policy. Anyone desiring additional information about an agenda item should direct such inquiries to the Office of the Superintendent.

\*<http://www.msad40.org/schoolBoard/boardAgendasAndMinutes.cfm>

Legal Reference: 1 MRSA § 401 et seq.

Cross Reference: BE Board Meetings

BEC Executives Sessions

KE Public Concerns and Complaints;

KDB Public's Right To Know / Freedom Of Access;

KEC Public Concerns about Instructional Resources

Adopted: January 24, 2013

Reviewed: February 23, 2016