

PUBLIC COMMENT AT BOARD MEETINGS

The M.S.A.D. No. 75 School Board meetings are conducted for the purpose of carrying on the official business of the school system. All meetings of the M.S.A.D. No. 75 Board of Directors are open to the public. The public is cordially invited to attend and comment at Board meetings as provided in this policy. This policy applies only to meetings of the full Board, not to meetings of Board committees. Public comment may be included for committee meetings at the discretion of the committee chair.

Although Board meetings are not public forums, the Board will provide appropriate opportunities at its meetings for members of the public to express opinions and concerns related to the matters concerning education and the M.S.A.D. No. 75 schools. The intent is to allow a fair and adequate opportunity for the public to be heard while ensuring that the time allowed for public comment does not interfere with the fulfillment of the scheduled agenda.

At special, emergency, or workshop meetings, public comments will be limited to the topic(s) of the particular meeting.

The Board will designate a portion of its agenda as an opportunity for public comment. During the time allotted for public comment, members of the public may speak on school and education matters, with the exception of personnel matters or complaints concerning specific employees or students. Such complaints shall be addressed through established policies and procedures. During public comment members of the public may not comment about an employee in either a negative or positive manner.

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.

- A. Residents and employees of the school unit are welcome to comment as provided in this policy. The Board will hear public comments from residents and employees of the school district first. Individual employees and/or employee groups will not be permitted to discuss matters for which complaint or grievance procedures are provided.
- B. If there is time remaining in the public comment period once all residents and employees have had the opportunity to speak, the Chair may permit comments from non-residents at the Chair's discretion.
- C. The Chair may limit the time allotted for comments on a particular topic as well as the time each individual may speak. In the event of a sizable audience, the Chair may require persons interested in speaking to sign up, prior to the beginning of the public comment period, so they may be called on in a fair and efficient manner. Individuals may not relinquish a portion of their allotted time to another speaker.
- D. During the time set aside for public comment, the Chair will be responsible for recognizing all speakers, who must state their name and town/city of residence before beginning their remarks.

- E. Speakers are expected to follow rules of common etiquette and decorum, including refraining from using vulgar and/or obscene language, yelling, threatening others using words or by other actions, making defamatory comments, or otherwise engaging in any activity that disrupts orderly meeting progress. Examples of disruptive conduct include, but are not limited to, exceeding the allotted time limits, talking over or interrupting others, offering repetitive comments, and offering comment on matters unrelated to the school unit's programs, policies, or operations.
- F. Speech that is a personally directed attack on a person or group of people based on their race, color, ancestry, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, disability, religion, or age, and is likely to provoke or incite violence or imminent lawless action, will not be permitted during public comment.
- G. All speakers are to address the Chair and direct questions or comments to particular Board members or the Superintendent only with 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.
- H. 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.
- 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. 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 will be posted and/or available prior to regular meetings. Anyone desiring additional information about an agenda item should direct such inquiries to the Office of the Superintendent.

Legal Reference: ***1 MRSA §401 ET SEQ.***
 20 MRSA §1001 (20)

Cross Reference: ***BEC – Executive Session***
 BEDB – Agenda
 BEDE – Rules of Order
 KL – Complaints
 KL-E – Addressing complaints, concerns, and issues at the lowest level

ADOPTION: August 13, 2020

FIRST READING OF REVISIONS: March 10, 2022

SECOND READING OF REVISIONS: March 24, 2022

ADOPTION OF REVISIONS: March 24, 2022

FIRST READING OF REVISIONS: February 8, 2024

SECOND READING OF REVISIONS: March 14, 2024

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