

## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT BOARD MEETINGS**

Regular, special and emergency meetings of the Board are open to the public. Executive Sessions are not open to the public. The Board wishes to provide opportunities for citizens to express their interests, concerns and suggestions related to matters under consideration by the Board. The public is cordially invited to attend and participate in open meetings as set forth in this policy.

As the elected representative body of the school unit, the Board conducts meetings to carry out the official business of the schools. These meetings are not public forums, but are meetings at which the Board does its business in public. An agenda is prepared and published in advance of each meeting in accordance with Board policy. Anyone desiring additional information about any item on the agenda should direct inquiries to the Superintendent's Office.

The Board reserves the right to limit public comment as needed to ensure efficiency and decorum. The public can request the addition of agenda items pursuant to policy.

The Board Chairperson is responsible for ensuring the orderly conduct of the Board meetings. The following "ground rules" shall guide public participation at Board meetings:

- A. Residents, employees, students and others with a legitimate interest in the Board's business, and with approval of the Board chair, are welcome to participate as provided in this policy.
- B. Orderly conduct of a meeting does not permit spontaneous discussion from the audience. Speakers are to be recognized by the Chairperson and to identify themselves by name before they begin speaking and to direct their comments and questions to the Board Chairperson. Board members wishing to address a speaker are asked to direct their comments through the Board Chairperson.
- C. In order to make the most efficient use of meeting time, groups or organizations are asked to designate spokespersons to present their comments. Speakers are also requested to avoid duplication or repetition of remarks made by others. The Board Chairperson has the prerogative to limit the time allotted for comments on a particular topic as well as the time each individual may speak.
- D. Gossip, defamatory comments, and abusive, vulgar, or threatening language are not permitted. The Board Chairperson has the prerogative to stop any presentation which violates this rule or which would violate the privacy interests of any individual.
- E. Complaints concerning individual students or employees will not be aired in public at Board meetings, but will be referred to the administration for resolution as appropriate according to policy.
- F. Employees and employee groups may not discuss matters at Board meetings for which other, more appropriate forums are provided by law or contract.

Legal Reference: 1 M.R.S.A. Section 40I et seq.  
20-A M.R.S.A. Section 1001

Cross Reference: BE – Board Meetings  
BEC – Executive Session  
BEDB – Agendas  
BEDD – Rules of Order  
KEB – Complaints About School Personnel

First Reading October 14, 2009

Second Reading October 28, 2009