

POLICY PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT BOARD MEETINGS CODE BDDH/KD

Regular, special and emergency meetings of the school board are open to the public. This board, as an elected representative body of the school unit, wishes to provide opportunity for citizens to express interests and concerns related to the matters under consideration by the board. The public is cordially invited to attend and participate as set forth in this policy.

Board meetings are conducted for the purpose of carrying on the official business of the school system. The meetings are not public forum meetings (as are town meetings), but are meetings which are held for the board to do its business in public. The minutes of each public meeting will record the action taken and will show how the board voted on each item presented for action. The journal of minutes is open and available to the public during normal business hours in the Office of the Superintendent of Schools.

Orderly conduct of a meeting does not permit spontaneous discussion from the audience nor among board members. Individuals or organizations desiring to make requests, presentations or proposals on matters before the board will be provided that opportunity.

Generally, public participation shall be limited to time periods just prior to board discussion of the agenda items upon which citizens wish to comment.

The intent of this policy is to allow a fair and adequate opportunity for the public to be heard on agenda items, to provide adequate time for the board to obtain necessary information on a subject before it, and to see that time allowed for open discussion does not interfere with the fulfillment of the scheduled agenda of the board.

In order that the board may fairly and adequately discharge its overall responsibility, a member of the public wishing to address the board on a specific topic not otherwise on the agenda must submit such a request in writing to the superintendent at least one full week in advance of the scheduled meeting. The superintendent and/or board Chair may add the item to the agenda at their discretion, or the Chair may waive this requirement.

An agenda shall be published in advance of each meeting in accordance with board policy. Copies are to be posted, or available for at least three weekdays prior to regular meetings, at the superintendent's office and in each school, and town office. Anyone desiring additional information about any item on the agenda should direct such inquiries to the Office of the Superintendent.

The following "ground rules" are to further guide public participation at meetings:

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

Legal Ref: Title I MSRA Sec 401 ET SEQ
Freedom of Access ("Right to Know Law")

Date Adopted: 9/9/81
Date Revised: 12/4/91
Date Revised: 1/5/94

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2. Citizens, employees, and others 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 board's discretion. Employees or employee groups will not be permitted to discuss matters for which other, more appropriate forums are provided.
3. All speakers are to identify themselves as they begin talking. They will not be permitted to participate in gossip, make defamatory comments, or use abusive or vulgar language. The board Chair will maintain the prerogative to discontinue any presentation which violates any of the public participation guidelines.
4. Comments and suggestions will be welcomed and given consideration by the board. Speakers may offer objective comments on school operations and programs that concern them. Generally, the board may hear but not discuss or act on an item not on the agenda. Personnel matters or complaints will not be entertained in a public meeting but will be deferred to established resolution procedures. Questions and concerns will be responded to through appropriate channels.
5. No complaints or allegations will be allowed concerning any personnel or any person connected to the school system. If appropriate, concerns about an individual will be handled in a conference where the rights and interests of all parties will be appropriately regarded
6. Generally, duplication or repetition of comments to the board should be avoided in order to make the most efficient use of the time in meetings. Groups or organizations are requested to be represented by designated spokespersons.
7. Special procedures shall be in place in case of disturbance or disorder. Such shall be prepared and reviewed annually by the superintendent, board Chair, board attorney, and others as appropriate, and attached to this policy as board regulation BDDH-R.

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MSAD # 46 School Board
Visitor's Orientation to Meetings

Welcome to this evening's Board meeting. If you wish to be heard by the Board, please note the "PUBLIC PARTICIPATION" at the beginning of the agenda. This time is set aside for visitors who are not part of the agenda to address the Board with their comments. The comments section of the agenda may not exceed fifteen (15) minutes unless extended by a vote of the Board.

Visitors should not expect a Board response to their comments or suggestions during the public participation period, since the Board may not have discussed or taken a position on the matter. If the Board has previously taken a position, the Superintendent may state the Board's position.

The Board's goal for the conduct of its meeting is to accomplish its business within a qualitative time frame, respecting the participation of visitors as well as all others who contribute to the effectiveness of its meeting. The Board agenda, therefore, is arranged to reserve adequate time for quality Board discussion of priority agenda items, but also to allow the opportunity for the public to be heard on agenda items.

The Board appreciates your attendance this evening and invites your continued interest in its work on behalf of the children and other residents of the District.

MSAD # 46
Board of Directors

MSAD # 46
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