

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT BOARD MEETINGS

The public is cordially invited to attend and participate in Board meetings. Regular, special, and emergency meetings of the Board are open to the public. The RSU 9 Board of Directors recognizes the value of public comment on educational issues and the importance of seeking public involvement in its meetings.

Board meetings are conducted for the purpose of carrying on the official business of the school system. These are not public forums but are meetings at which the Board does its business in public. The intent of the RSU 9 Board is to allow fair and adequate opportunity for citizens to be heard while at the same time ensuring that the time allowed for public discussion does not interfere with the fulfillment of the scheduled agenda. From time to time the Board may schedule community meetings in different towns for the purpose of receiving extensive public comments.

Agendas for regularly scheduled Board meetings shall be published at least 48 (forty-eight) hours in advance of each meeting in accordance with board policy. Distribution will be at the Superintendent's office and at each school, on the district website, to local media, and to town offices for posting as possible. Anyone desiring additional information about an agenda item should direct inquiries to the Office of the Superintendent.

Orderly conduct of a meeting requires that discussion from the public and among Board members be structured. Opportunities for public participation shall be allowed during a designated period on the Board agenda.

The following ground rules shall guide public participation at meetings. The Board Chair shall be responsible for maintaining proper order and compliance with these guidelines:

- A. Citizens, employees, students, and others with a legitimate interest in the Board's business are welcome; to participate as provided in this policy;
- B. All speakers must identify themselves when they begin speaking;

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- C. For the sake of an orderly meeting, all communication is to be addressed to the Chair, who may then refer questions to the Superintendent or other board members as needed;
- D. In order to ensure the most efficient and effective use of this time, general guidelines for public comment will allow individuals to be given 2 (two) minutes to speak.

The Chair may require persons interested in speaking to sign up (immediately prior to the start of the meeting) so they may be called on in a fair and efficient manner. Groups may be asked to choose a few designated speakers. Speakers are requested to avoid duplication or repetition of remarks made by others.

Comments may not involve personal matters or complaints concerning specific employees or students; such matters should be addressed through otherwise established policies and procedures or referred to the Superintendent.

Citizens are expected to use respectful language and communication as appropriate for a school setting. The Board Chair has the prerogative to stop any presentation which is too lengthy, violates the privacy interests of any individual, or becomes personally directed, abusive, obscene, or irrelevant to the topic.

- A. There will be a 10 (ten) minute period of public comment on each regular RSU 9 School Board agenda during which citizens may speak on any subject directly related to the operations of the schools.
- B. The Board will hear comments, but there will be no discussion during this period. If necessary, additional information will be provided at a future meeting.
- C. Any written materials to be passed out to the Board must first be approved by either the Board Chair or the Superintendent of Schools.
- D. Only by a majority vote of the Board members present may the overall 10 (ten) minute time limit for public comment, and/or the general 2 (two) minute limit on individual comments be shortened, extended, or eliminated.

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If the public has questions or concerns related to the operation of the school they are encouraged to contact the appropriate administrator or board members.

Legal Reference: Title 20-A MRSA Sec. 1001, Paragraph 20 - School board meeting public comment period
Title 1 MRSA Sec. 401 ET SEQ. - Freedom of Access

Cross Reference: BEC: Executive Session
BEDA: Notification of Board Meetings
BEDB: Agenda
BEDC: Quorum
BEDD: Rules of Order
BEDG: Minutes
KE: Public Complaints

Adopted: April 11, 2017
Revised: September 10, 2019
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