PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT BOARD MEETINGS

Regular, special and emergency meetings of the Board are 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 these meetings as set forth in this policy.

In order that the Board may fairly and adequately discharge its overall responsibilities, citizens or groups wishing to address the Board on a topic not otherwise on the agenda must submit 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.

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.

Generally, opportunities for the public to speak on agenda items will take place prior to the Board's vote on those items.

The Board Chairperson and the Superintendent will develop procedures for remote public participation when remote participation is offered.

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

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. Orderly conduct of a meeting does not permit spontaneous discussion from the audience. Speakers are 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.

F. Employees and employee groups may not discuss matters at Board meetings for which other, more appropriate forums are provided by law or contract.

G. The Chair has the authority to stop any speaker who violates these guidelines or the privacy rights of others. The Chair also has the authority to call a recess of the Board.

H. Persons who disrupt the meeting may be asked to leave, and the Chair may request law enforcement assistance as necessary to restore order.

Legal Reference:	1 M.R.S.A. Section 401 et seq. 20-A M.R.S.A. Section 1001
Cross Reference:	BEDB - Agenda BED - Remote Participation in School Board Meetings
ADOPTED:	March 8, 2005 (Replaced original BEDH)
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