Policy: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT BOARD MEETINGS

Code: A21

Policy

It is the policy of the Board to encourage public participation at its meetings.

Background

Public participation is very important to the successful function of the Maple Run Unified School District. The Board wants to carry out its business with the benefit of public input and expertise. It also wants to keep the public informed and up-to-date on what is happening in the community’s schools.

Implementation

The public shall be given a reasonable opportunity to express its opinion on matters which may be considered by the Board, provided that comments are respectful, and that order is maintained. Public comment shall be subject to reasonable rules established by the chairperson. Public participation shall not apply to quasi-judicial proceedings. Reasonable rules of participation shall be used to insure that meetings are conducted in an orderly fashion and that the business at hand is completed in a timely manner. These rules may take into consideration such things as length of each speaker’s presentation and the number of times each speaker may comment.

Persons Who May Address the Board

1. Any District resident
2. School staff members, students and parents
3. Individuals who have been requested by the Superintendent, Principal, or the Board to present a given subject
4. Persons who are directly affected by matters on the Board agenda
5. Others at the discretion of the Board

Public Comment

1. There will be time set aside on the agenda for public input at every regular, special or emergency meeting of the Board. This time will be scheduled before action is taken by the board on any agenda item.
2. Persons may address the Board on an item, regardless of whether or not it is on the agenda. However the Board is prohibited from engaging in a conversation on any item that is not listed on the legally warned agenda. If necessary, the Board may ask clarifying questions. It should be realized that if a visitor addresses the Board on an agenda item, the Board will not actually
35 discuss that item until it reaches that point in the agenda.
36 3. The Board may, at its discretion, allow additional time for visitors to address the Board when
37 that item comes up in the agenda.
38 4. The purpose of addressing the Board is to give testimony to the Board. A visitor should not
39 expect that the Board will engage them in conversation or answer any direct questions. The
40 Board may decide to provide answers to specific questions at a later time if those questions are
41 provided in writing.
42 5. When the number of people wishing to speak is large, the Chair may elect to use a speakers'
43 list. Members of the public will be given an opportunity to sign the speakers' list. The Chair will
44 allocate a reasonable amount of time for each speaker, so that each will have the opportunity
45 to be heard.
46 6. Each visitor will typically be allowed to address the Board only once per meeting.
47 7. The Chair shall rule out of order any presentation to the Board which breaches the privacy or
48 other rights of students, parents or school employees, or which does not comply with Board
49 policy on complaints.
50 8. The Chair shall cut short any testimony that becomes disrespectful or inflammatory.

**MRUSD Board**

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<td>1st Reading</td>
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<td>2nd Reading</td>
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Date Warned: 7/8/2016
Date Adopted: 7/20/2016

Legal Reference(s):

1 V.S.A. §§310 et seq. (Public meetings)
16 V.S.A. §554 (b) (School board meetings)