CSD 13 SCHOOL BOARD
POLICY NUMBER: 2.01P (NEPN/NSBA: BEDH)
Adopted: 3/1/94
Previous Revisions: 5/4/99, 7/2/02, 11/6/08, 3/7/17, 4/4/17, 3/3/20
Revised: 12/7/21

SCHOOL BOARD BY-LAWS - PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS

School Board (Board) meetings are conducted for the purpose of carrying on the official business of the school system. All regular, special and emergency meetings of the Board are open to the public. The public is cordially invited to attend and participate in Board meetings as provided in this policy. This policy applies to meetings of the full Board, not to meetings of Board subcommittees.

Although Board meetings are not public forums, the Board will provide appropriate opportunities for citizens to express opinions and concerns related to matters concerning education and the CSD 13 schools. The intent is to allow a fair and adequate opportunity for the public to be heard and to provide adequate time for the Board to obtain information and opinion on subjects before it, while ensuring that the time allowed for public discussion does not interfere with the fulfillment of the scheduled agenda.

During the time allotted for public participation, members of the public may speak on any subject directly related to the operations of the schools, except for personnel matters or complaints concerning specific employees or students, which shall be addressed through established policies and procedures. Public participation may be permitted on specific agenda items after initial board discussion is finished and the speaker is called on by the chair.

Members of the public may address the Board within the guidelines provided in this policy. The Chair shall be responsible for maintaining proper order and compliance with these guidelines.

The following guidelines shall apply to public participation at Board meetings.

A. Citizens and employees of the school unit are welcome to participate as provided in this policy. Others may be recognized to speak at the Chair's discretion. Individual employees and/or employee groups will not be permitted to discuss matters for which complaint or grievance procedures are provided.

B. There will be a 10-minute period of public comment on each regular School Board agenda during which citizens may speak on any subject directly related to the operations of the schools. The Chair may increase the time period if deemed necessary to allow for adequate representation of public input. Time allotted for public participation will be 3 minutes per speaker. The Chair may increase the time allotted for comments by the speaker on a particular topic as well as limit the time each individual may speak depending on the number of requests.

C. In the event of a sizeable audience, the Chair may require persons interested in speaking to sign up so they may be called on in a fair and efficient manner.
D. During the time set aside for public participation, those wishing to speak must first be recognized by the chair and then must identify themselves as they begin speaking.
E. Speakers are not permitted to share gossip, make defamatory comments, or use abusive or vulgar language.
F. All speakers are to address the Chair and direct questions or comments to particular Board members or the Superintendent only with approval of the Chair. Requests for information or concerns that require further research may be referred to the Superintendent to be addressed at a later time.
G. Members of the Board and the Superintendent may ask questions of any person who addresses the Board but are expected to refrain from arguing or debating issues. Questions must be addressed through the Chair.
H. No complaints or allegations will be allowed at Board meetings concerning any person employed by the school system or against particular students. Personal matters or complaints concerning student or staff issues will not be considered in a public meeting but will be referred through established policies and procedures.
I. In order to make efficient use of meeting time, the Board discourages duplication or repetition of comments to the Board. The Board requests that groups or organizations be represented by designated spokespersons.
J. The Chair has the authority to stop any presentation that violates these guidelines or the privacy rights of others.
K. Persons who disrupt the meeting may be asked to leave, and the Chair may request law enforcement assistance as necessary to restore order.

An agenda shall be published in advance of each meeting in accordance with Board policy. Copies will be posted and/or available prior to regular meetings at the Superintendent's Office and on the CSD 13 website. Anyone desiring additional information about an agenda item should direct such inquiries to the Office of the Superintendent.

Legal Reference: 1 MRSA § 401 et seq.

Cross Reference: 2.01H Rules of Order
2.01N Agenda
2.01J School Board Meetings
11.02 Community Concerns