REMOTE PARTICIPATION IN PRESC BOARD MEETINGS

The **Penobscot River Educational Service Center (PRESC)** allows members of the Executive Board to participate in a public meeting of the Board by remote methods in limited circumstances as provided in 1 MRSA §403-B.

For the purpose of this policy, "remote methods" means telephonic or video technology allowing simultaneous reception of information and may also include other means necessary to provide reasonable accommodations to individuals with disabilities. Remote participation by board members cannot be by text-only means such as email, text messages, or chat functions.

Members of the Executive Board are expected to be physically present for board meetings except when being physically present is not practicable.

Circumstances in which physical presence for public meetings is not practicable include:

1. The existence of an emergency or other issue that requires the Board itself to meet by remote methods.

   An emergency may be a State-declared emergency, where there has been a declaration of a state of emergency by the Governor that applies to the school unit, or a local emergency (e.g., adverse weather conditions) or urgent issue requiring Board action.

   The PRESC President, in consultation with the Executive Director, will determine whether there is a local emergency or urgent issue that requires a remote meeting of the Executive Board.

2. Illness, or other physical condition, or temporary absence from the area governed by the Executive Board that causes a Board member to face significant difficulties traveling to and attending in person at the designated physical location of the Board meeting.

   Prior notice of the Board member's absence and the reason for it, with indication that the Board member plans to participate remotely, should be communicated to the PRESC President and / or Executive Director as far in advance of the meeting as practicable.

The opportunity for the public to comment at PRESC Board meetings (20-A MRSA §1001(20)) applies to remote public meetings. If the Board allows or is required to provide an opportunity for public participation/public input during the meeting, an effective means of communication between the members of the Board and the public must be provided (e.g., by submitting comments or questions by chat or by raising a hand on Zoom).

Individuals with disabilities seeking a reasonable accommodation should contact the PRESC President and / or Executive Director as far in advance of the Board meeting as practicable.

Members of the public participating in public meetings of the board are expected to comply with the guidelines for public participation provided in the Board's policy BEDH, or in such rules as the Board may develop specifically for remote meetings.

Notice of all Board meetings is required (1 MRSA § 406). When the public may attend by remote methods, notice must include the means by which members of the public may access the meeting using remote methods. The notice must also identify a location for members of the public to attend in person. The Board may not determine that public attendance at a meeting will be limited solely to remote methods except under the conditions in subparagraph 1 above (emergency or urgent issue meetings).

A member of the Board who participates remotely in a public meeting of the Board is considered present for purposes of a quorum and voting.

All votes taken during a public meeting of the Board using remote methods must be taken by roll call vote that can be seen and heard if using video technology, and heard if using only audio technology, by the other members of the board and the public.

The Board will make all documents and other materials to be considered by the Board available, electronically or otherwise, to members of the public who attend remotely to the same extent customarily available to members of the public who attend public meetings of the Board in person, as long as additional costs are not incurred by the Board.

Legal Reference: 1 MRSA § 403-B, 406
20 MRSA §1001(20)