PUBLIC COMMENT AT BOARD MEETINGS

Meetings of the M.S.A.D. No. 75 Board of Directors are conducted for the purpose of carrying out the official business of the school system. All meetings of the M.S.A.D. No. 75 Board of Directors are open to the public. The public is cordially invited to attend and comment at Board meetings as provided in this policy.

Although Board meetings are not public forums, the Board will provide appropriate opportunities at its meetings for members of the public to express opinions and concerns related to school and education matters. The intent is to allow a fair and adequate opportunity for the public to be heard while ensuring that the time allowed for public comment does not interfere with the fulfillment of the scheduled agenda.

At special, emergency, or workshop meetings of the Board, public comments will be limited to the topic(s) of the particular meeting. Public comment may be included at Board committee meetings at the discretion of the committee chair.

The Board will designate a portion of its agenda as an opportunity for public comment. During the time allotted for public comment, members of the public may speak on school and education matters, with the exception of personnel matters or complaints concerning specific employees or students. Such complaints shall be addressed through established policies and procedures. Discussion of personnel matters is not permitted during the public comment period due to the privacy, confidentiality and due process rights of district employees. For purposes of this policy, "discussion of a personnel matter" means any discussion, whether positive or negative, of the job performance or conduct of a district employee (whether the employee is named directly or, in the judgment of the Board Chair, the identity of the employee can be reasonably identified due to the content of the remarks).

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.

A. Residents and employees of the district are welcome to comment as provided in this policy. The Board will hear public comments from residents and employees of the school district first. Individual employees and/or employee groups will not be permitted to discuss matters for which complaint or grievance procedures are provided.

B. If there is time remaining in the public comment period once all residents and employees have had the opportunity to speak, the Chair may permit comments from non-residents at the Chair's discretion.

C. The Chair may limit the time allotted for comments on a particular topic as well as the time each individual may speak. The Chair may require persons interested in speaking to

sign up, prior to the beginning of the public comment period, so they may be called on in a fair and efficient manner. Individuals may not relinquish a portion of their allotted time to another speaker.

D. During the time set aside for public comment, the Chair will be responsible for recognizing all speakers, who must state their name and town/city of residence before beginning their remarks.

E. Speakers are expected to follow rules of common etiquette and decorum at the forum – a school business meeting at which students may be present – and are expected to refrain from using indecent and/or obscene language, inciting illegal conduct, engaging in disruptive conduct, yelling, threatening others using words or by other actions, making defamatory comments, or otherwise engaging in any activity that disrupts orderly meeting progress. Examples of disruptive conduct include, but are not limited to, exceeding the allotted time limits, talking over or interrupting others, offering repetitive comments, and offering comment on matters unrelated to school and education matters.

- ***Indecent*** – the remark is uttered before 10:00 p.m. and describes or depicts sexual or excretory activities or organs in a patently offensive manner as measured by contemporary community standards.

- ***Obscene*** – the remark appeals to the prurient (i.e., shameful, morbid, or unwholesome fascination with sex, nudity, or excretory functions) interest; depicts or describes sexual conduct in a patently offensive way; and, taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political or scientific value.

F. Speech that is a personally directed attack on a person or group of people based on their race, color, ancestry, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, disability, religion, or age, and is likely to provoke or incite violence or imminent lawless action, will not be permitted during public comment.

G. 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.

H. 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.

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. Individuals shall stand behind the lectern during their allotted time for comment. Speakers will not be permitted to approach the Board or walk or stand elsewhere around the room during their comment period. Speakers must be recognized by the Board Chair, and all public comments should be addressed to the Board Chair. Members of the audience shall not offer audible commentary or otherwise disrupt the recognized speaker, or the business of the Board.

K. The Chair has the authority to stop any presentation that violates these guidelines or the privacy rights of others.

L. Persons who disrupt the meeting may be asked to leave. 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. Anyone desiring additional information about an agenda item should direct such inquiries to the Office of the Superintendent.

LEGAL REFERENCE: 20-A MRSA § 1001(20)
20-A MRSA § 6101
1 MRSA § 405

CROSS REFERENCE: BEC – Executive Sessions
BEDB – Agenda
BDDE – Rules of Order
KL – Complaints
KL-E – Addressing complaints, concerns, and issues at the lowest level

ADOPTION: August 13, 2020
REVISION, FIRST READING: March 10, 2022
REVISION, SECOND READING: March 24, 2022
REVISION, ADOPTION: March 24, 2022
REVISION, FIRST READING: February 8, 2024

REVISION, SECOND READING:	March 14, 2024
REVISION, ADOPTION:	March 14, 2024
REVISION, FIRST READING:	May 28, 2026
REVISION, SECOND READING:	June 25, 2026
REVISION, ADOPTION:	June 25, 2026