

EAST MILLINOCKET SCHOOL BOARD POLICY
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT BOARD MEETINGS

NEPN/NSBA CODE: BEDH

1. Regular, special and emergency meetings of the Board are open to the public. The Board, the elected representative body of the school unit, will provide appropriate opportunities for citizens to express interests and concerns related to the matters under consideration by the Board. The public is cordially invited to attend and participate in Board meetings as set forth in this policy.
2. The school board recognizes the value of public comment on educational issues and the importance of involving members of the public in its meetings. To permit fair and orderly expression of such comment, the school board ~~will~~ may:
 - ✓ Allow comment at the beginning of the meeting and/or
 - ✓ Allow comment during the meeting and/or
 - ✓ Allow comment at the end of the meeting
3. The intent is to allow a fair and adequate opportunity for the public to be heard, to provide adequate time for the Board to obtain necessary information on subjects before it, and to ensure that the time allowed for public discussion does not interfere with the fulfillment of the scheduled agenda.
4. Board meetings are conducted for the purpose of carrying on the official business of the school system. The meetings are not public forum meetings, but are meetings which are held for the Board to do its business in public. The minutes of each public meeting record the actions taken and show how the Board voted on each item presented for action. Minutes are available to the public during normal business hours in the Office of the Superintendent.
5. Orderly conduct of a meeting does not permit spontaneous discussion from the audience, nor among Board members. Public participation shall be limited to time periods designated on the Board's agenda. At the Chair's discretion, public participation may be permitted just prior to Board discussion of particular agenda items. The chairperson may interrupt or terminate an individual's statement when it is too lengthy, personally directed, abusive, obscene, or irrelevant. The board as a whole will have the final decision in determining the appropriateness of all such rulings.
6. 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.

7. 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. Anyone desiring additional information about an agenda item should direct such inquiries to the Office of the Superintendent.
9. The following procedures will govern discussion and will be furnished to all attending for the purpose of maintaining orderly control of public meetings called by the school board.
 - A. Citizens of the school unit, employees and others with a legitimate interest in the Board's business are welcome to participate as provided in this policy. Others may be recognized to speak at the Board's discretion. Speakers will address the chair for recognition.
 - B. Each speaker is limited to a maximum of three minutes. A speaker will not be recognized for the second time on a particular item unless time remains after all have been heard. Speakers are requested to avoid repetition.
 - 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 the most expedient order.
 - D. Each speaker must state his name and town of residence. Speakers are not permitted to share gossip, make defamatory comments, or use abusive or vulgar language. The Chair has the authority to stop any presentation which violates the public participation guidelines or the privacy rights of others. Persons who disrupt the meeting may be asked to leave, and the Chair may request law enforcement assistance if necessary to restore order.
 - E. Constructive comments, suggestions and questions are welcomed and given consideration by the Board. 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. The Chair may, at his/her discretion, refer questions to the Superintendent to address at a later time.
 - F. 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.
 - G. No complaints or allegations will be allowed at Board meetings concerning any person employed by the school system. Personal matters or complaints concerning student or staff issues will not be considered in a public meeting but will be referred through established resolution procedures.

- H. In order to make efficient use of limited time, the Board discourages duplication or repetition of comments to the Board. The Board requests that groups or organizations be represented by designated spokespersons. Speakers must concern themselves with the topic under discussion or be ruled out of order
- I. All speakers must observe rules of common etiquette. Personalities are not to be injected. Anyone violating this rule will be denied the floor by the chairperson.
- J. Following each vote on a motion, the chairperson will announce the results.

Adopted Date: 12-11-90

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