

206 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNING BOARD MEETINGS/COMPLAINTS ABOUT PERSONS AT GOVERNING BOARD MEETINGS AND DATA PRIVACY CONSIDERATIONS

I. PURPOSE

- A. The governing board recognizes the value of participation by the public in deliberations and decisions on school district matters. At the same time, the governing board recognizes the importance of conducting orderly and efficient proceedings, with opportunity for expression of all participants' respective views.
- B. The purpose of this policy is to provide procedures to assure open and orderly public discussion as well as to protect the due process and privacy rights of individuals under the law.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

- A. It is the policy of the governing board to encourage discussion by citizens of subjects related to the management of the CSEC at governing board meetings. The governing board may adopt reasonable time, place and manner restrictions on public expression in order to facilitate free discussion by all interested parties.
- B. The governing board shall, as a matter of policy, protect the legal rights to privacy and due process of employees and students.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. "Personnel data" means data on individuals collected because the individual is or was an employee or applicant for employment. For purposes of this policy, "employee" includes a volunteer or an independent contractor.
- B. Personnel data on current and former employees that is "public" includes:

Name; employee identification number, which must not be the social security number; actual gross salary; salary range; contract fees; actual gross pension; the value and nature of employer paid fringe benefits; the basis for and the amount of any added remuneration, including expense reimbursement, in addition to salary; bargaining unit; job title; job description; education and training background; previous work experience; date of first and last employment; the existence and status of any complaints or charges against the employee, regardless of whether the complaint or charge resulted in a disciplinary action; the final disposition of any disciplinary action together with the specific reasons for the action and data documenting the basis of the action, excluding data that would identify confidential sources who are employees of the public body; the terms of any agreement settling any dispute arising out of the employment relationship, including an executive director buyout agreement, except that the agreement must include specific reasons for the agreement if it involves the payment of more than

\$10,000 of public money; work location; a work telephone number; badge number; honors and awards received; and payroll time sheets or other comparable data that are only used to account for employee's work time for payroll purposes, except to the extent that release of time sheet data would reveal the employee's reasons for the use of sick or other medical leave or other not public data.

- C. Personnel data on current and former applicants for employment that is "public" includes:

Veteran status; relevant test scores; rank on eligible list; job history; education and training; and work availability. Names of applicants shall be private data except when certified as eligible for appointment to a vacancy or when applicants are considered by the appointing authority to be finalists for a position in public employment. For purposes of this subdivision, "finalist" means an individual who is selected to be interviewed by the appointing authority prior to selection.

- D. "Educational data" means data maintained by the CSEC which relates to a student.

- E. "Student" means an individual currently or formerly enrolled or registered in the CSEC, or applicants for enrollment, or individuals who receive shared time services.

- F. Data about applicants for appointments to a public body, including a governing board, collected by the CSEC as a result of the applicant's application for appointment to the public body are private data on individuals, except that the following are public: name; city of residence, except where the appointment has a residency requirement that requires the entire address to be public; education and training; employment history; volunteer work; awards and honors; and prior government service. Once an individual has been appointed to a public body, the following additional items of data are public: residential address and either a telephone number or electronic mail address where the appointee can be reached, or both at the request of the appointee; provided, however, any electronic mail address or telephone number provided by a public body for use by an appointee shall be public. An appointee may use an electronic mail address or telephone number provided by the public body as the designated electronic mail address or telephone number at which the appointee can be reached.

IV. RIGHTS TO PRIVACY

- A. CSEC employees have a legal right to privacy related to matters which may come before the governing board, including, but not limited to, the following:

1. right to a private hearing for teachers, pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 122A.40, Subd. 14 (Teachers Discharge Hearing);
2. right to privacy of personnel data as provided by Minn. Stat. § 13.43 (Personnel Data);

3. right to consideration by the governing board of certain data treated as not public as provided in Minn. Stat. § 13D.05 (Not Public Data);
 4. right to a private hearing for licensed or nonlicensed head varsity coaches to discuss reasons for nonrenewal of a coaching contract pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 122A.33, Subd. 3.
- B. CSEC students have a legal right to privacy related to matters which may come before the governing board, including, but not limited to, the following:
1. right to a private hearing, Minn. Stat. § 121A.47, Subd. 5 (Student Dismissal Hearing);
 2. right to privacy of educational data, Minn. Stat. § 13.32 (Educational Data); 20 U.S.C. § 1232g (FERPA);
 3. right to privacy of complaints as provided by child abuse reporting and discrimination laws, Minn. Stat. § 626.556 (Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors) and Minn. Stat. Ch. 363A (Minnesota Human Rights Act).

V. THE PUBLIC'S OPPORTUNITY TO BE HEARD

The governing board will strive to give all citizens of the member school districts an opportunity to be heard and to have complaints considered and evaluated, within the limits of the law and this policy and subject to reasonable time, place, and manner restrictions. Among the rights available to the public is the right to access public data as provided by Minn. Stat. § 13.43, Subd. 2 (Public Data).

VI. PROCEDURES

A. Agenda Items

1. Citizens who wish to have a subject discussed at a public governing board meeting are encouraged to notify the executive director's office in advance of the governing board meeting. The citizen should provide his or her name, address, the name of group represented (if any), and the subject to be covered or the issue to be addressed.
2. Citizens who wish to address the governing board on a particular subject should identify the subject and identify agenda item(s) to which their comments pertain.
3. The governing board chair will recognize one speaker at a time, and will rule out of order other speakers who are not recognized. Only those speakers recognized by the chair will be allowed to speak. Comments by others are out of order. Individuals who interfere with or interrupt speakers, the governing board, or the proceedings may be directed to leave.

4. The governing board retains the discretion to limit discussion of any agenda item to a reasonable period of time as determined by the governing board. If a group or organization wishes to address the governing board on a topic, the governing board reserves the right to require designation of one or more representatives or spokespersons to speak on behalf of the group or organization.
5. Matters proposed for placement on the agenda which may involve data privacy concerns, which may involve preliminary allegations, or which may be potentially libelous or slanderous in nature shall not be considered in public, but shall be processed as determined by the governing board in accordance with governing law.
6. The governing board chair shall promptly rule out of order any discussion by any person, including governing board members, that would violate the provisions of state or federal law, this policy or the statutory rights of privacy of an individual.
7. Personal attacks by anyone addressing the governing board are unacceptable. Persistence in such remarks by an individual shall terminate that person's privilege to address the governing board.
8. Depending upon the number of persons in attendance seeking to be heard, the governing board reserves the right to impose such other limitations and restrictions as necessary in order to provide an orderly, efficient and fair opportunity for those present to be heard.

B. Complaints

1. Routine complaints about a teacher or other employee should first be directed to that teacher or employee or to the employee's immediate supervisor.
2. If the complaint is against an employee relating to child abuse, discrimination, racial, religious, or sexual harassment, or other activities involving an intimidating atmosphere, the complaint should be directed to the employee's supervisor or other official as designated in the CSEC policy governing that kind of complaint. In the absence of a designated person, the matter should be referred to the executive director.
3. Unresolved complaints from Paragraph 1. of this section or problems concerning the CSEC should be directed to the executive director's office.
4. Complaints which are unresolved at the executive director's level may be brought before the governing board by notifying the governing board in writing.

C. Open Forum

The governing board shall normally provide a specified period of time where citizens may address the governing board on any topic, subject to the limitations of this policy. The governing board reserves the right to allocate a specific period of time for this purpose and limit time for speakers accordingly.

The governing board may decide to hold certain types of public meetings where the public will not be invited to address the governing board. Possible examples are work sessions and board retreats. The public will still be entitled to notice of these meetings and will be allowed to attend these meetings, but the public will not be allotted time during the meeting to address the board.

VII. PENALTIES FOR VIOLATION OF DATA PRIVACY

- A. The CSEC is liable for damages, costs and attorneys' fees, and in the event of a willful violation, punitive damages for violation of state data privacy laws. (Minn. Stat. § 13.08, Subd. 1)
- B. A person who willfully violates data privacy is guilty of a misdemeanor. (Minn. Stat. § 13.09)
- C. In the case of an employee, willful violation constitutes just cause for suspension without pay or dismissal. (Minn. Stat. § 13.09)

Legal References: Minn. Stat. Ch. 13 (Minnesota Government Data Practices Act)
Minn. Stat. § 13.601, Subd. 3 (Applicants for Appointment)
Minn. Stat. § 13D.05 (Open Meeting Law)
Minn. Stat. § 121A.47, Subd. 5 (Student Dismissal Hearing)
Minn. Stat. § 122A.33, Subd. 3 (Coaches; Opportunity to Respond)
Minn. Stat. § 122A.40, Subd. 14 (Teacher Discharge Hearing)
Minn. Stat. § 122A.44 (Contracting with Teachers)
Minn. Stat. § 123B.02, Subd. 14 (Employees; Contracts for Services)
Minn. Stat. Ch. 363A (Minnesota Human Rights Act)
Minn. Stat. § 626.556 (Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors)
20 U.S.C. § 1232g (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act)
Minn. Op. Atty. Gen. No. 852 (July 14, 2006)

Cross References: MSBA/MASA Model Policy 205 (Open Meetings and Closed Meetings)
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 207 (Public Hearings)
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 406 (Public and Private Personnel Data)
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 515 (Protection and Privacy of Pupil Records)
MSBA Service Manual, Chapter 13, School Law Bulletin "C" (Minnesota's Open Meeting Law)
MSBA Service Manual, Chapter 13, School Law Bulletin "I" (School Records – Privacy – Access to Data)

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