

MEETING CONDUCT

Meeting Procedures

All Governing Board meetings shall begin on time and shall be guided by an agenda prepared in accordance with Board bylaws and posted and distributed in accordance with the Ralph M. Brown Act (open meeting requirements) and other applicable laws.

The Board president shall conduct Board meetings in accordance with Board bylaws and procedures that enable the Board to efficiently consider issues and carry out the will of the majority.

Quorum and Abstentions

The Board shall act by majority vote of all of the membership constituting the Board. (Education Code 35164)

The Board believes that when no conflict of interest requires abstention, its members have a duty to vote on issues before them. When a member abstains, the abstention shall not be counted for purposes of determining whether a majority of the membership of the Board has taken action.

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Public Participation

Members of the public are encouraged to attend Board meetings and to address the Board concerning any item on the agenda or within the Board's jurisdiction. So as not to inhibit public participation, persons attending Board meetings shall not be requested to sign in, complete a questionnaire, or otherwise provide their name or other information as a condition of attending the meeting.

In order to conduct district business in an orderly and efficient manner, the Board requires that public presentations to the Board comply with the following procedures:

1. The Board shall give members of the public an opportunity to address the Board on any item of interest to the public that is within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Board, either before or during the Board's consideration of the item. (Education Code 35145.5; Government Code 54954.3)
2. At a time so designated on the agenda at a regular meeting, members of the public may bring before the Board matters that are not listed on the agenda. The Board shall take no action or discussion on any item not appearing on the posted agenda, except as authorized by law. (Education Code 35145.5; Government Code 54954.2)

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3. Without taking action, Board members or district staff members may briefly respond to statements made or questions posed by the public about items not appearing on the agenda. Additionally, on their own initiative or in response to questions posed by the public, a Board members or staff members may ask a question for clarification, make a brief announcement, or make a brief report on his/her own activities. (Government Code 54954.2)
4. The Board need not allow the public to speak on any item that has already been considered by a committee composed exclusively of Board members at a public meeting where the public had the opportunity to address the committee on that item. However, if the Board determines that the item has been substantially changed since the committee heard the item, the Board shall provide an opportunity for the public to speak. (Government Code 54954.3)

Furthermore, the Board or a Board member may provide a reference to staff or other resources for factual information, ask staff to report back to the Board at a subsequent meeting concerning any matter, or take action directing staff to place a matter of business on a future agenda. (Government Code 54954.2)

5. A person wishing to be heard by the Board shall first be recognized by the president and shall then proceed to comment as briefly as the subject permits.

In general, individual speakers will be allowed three minutes to address the Board on each agenda or nonagenda item, and the Board will limit the total time for public input on each item to 20 minutes. However, in exceptional circumstances when necessary to ensure full opportunity for public input, the Board president may, with Board consent, adjust the amount of time allowed for public input and/or the time allotted for each speaker. Any such adjustment shall be done equitably so as to allow a diversity of viewpoints. The president may also ask members of the public with the same viewpoint to select a few individuals to address the Board on behalf of that viewpoint.

In order to ensure that non-English speakers receive the same opportunity to directly address the Board, any member of the public who utilizes a translator shall be provided at least twice the allotted time to address the Board, unless simultaneous translation equipment is used to allow the Board to hear the translated public testimony simultaneously. (Government Code 54954.3)

6. The Board president may rule on the appropriateness of a topic, subject to the following conditions:
 - a. If a topic would be suitably addressed at a later time, the Board president may indicate the time and place when it should be presented.
 - b. The Board shall not prohibit public criticism of its policies, procedures, programs, services, acts, or omissions. (Government Code 54954.3)

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- c. The Board shall not prohibit public criticism of district employees. However, whenever a member of the public initiates specific complaints or charges against an individual employee, the Board president shall inform the complainant of the appropriate complaint procedure.

- 7. The Board president shall not permit any disturbance or willful interruption of Board meetings. Persistent disruption by an individual or group or any conduct or statements that threaten the safety of any person(s) at the meeting shall be grounds for the president to terminate the privilege of addressing the Board.

The Board may remove disruptive individuals and order the room cleared if necessary. In this case, members of the media not participating in the disturbance shall be allowed to remain, and individuals not participating in such disturbances may be allowed to remain at the discretion of the Board. When the room is ordered cleared due to a disturbance, further Board proceedings shall concern only matters appearing on the agenda. (Government Code 54957.9)

When such disruptive conduct occurs, the Superintendent or designee shall contact local law enforcement.

Recording by the Public

Members of the public may record an open Board meeting using an audio or video recorder, still or motion picture camera, cell phone, or other device, provided that the noise, illumination, or obstruction of view does not persistently disrupt the meeting. The Superintendent or designee may designate locations from which members of the public may make such recordings without causing a distraction.

If the Board finds that noise, illumination, or obstruction of view related to these activities would persistently disrupt the proceedings, these activities shall be discontinued or restricted as determined by the Board. (Government Code 54953.5, 54953.6)

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Legal Reference:

EDUCATION CODE

- 5095 Powers of remaining board members and new appointees*
- 32210 Willful disturbance of public school or meeting a misdemeanor*
- 35010 Prescription and enforcement of rules*
- 35145.5 Agenda; public participation; regulations*
- 35163 Official actions, minutes and journal*
- 35164 Vote requirements*
- 35165 Effect of vacancies upon majority and unanimous votes by seven member board*

CODE OF CIVIL PROCEDURE

- 527.8 Workplace Violence Safety Act*

GOVERNMENT CODE

- 54953.3 Prohibition against conditions for attending a board meeting*
- 54953.5 Audio or video tape recording of proceedings*
- 54953.6 Broadcasting of proceedings*
- 54954.2 Agenda; posting; action on other matters*
- 54954.3 Opportunity for public to address legislative body; regulations*
- 54957 Closed sessions*
- 54957.9 Disorderly conduct of general public during meeting; clearing of room*

PENAL CODE

- 403 Disruption of assembly or meeting*

COURT DECISIONS

- City of San Jose v. Garbett (2010) 190 Cal.App.4th 526*
- Norse v. City of Santa Cruz (9th Cir. 2010) 629 F3d 966*
- McMahon v. Albany Unified School District, (2002) 104 Cal.App.4th 1275*
- Rubin v. City of Burbank, (2002) 101 Cal.App.4th 1194*
- Baca v. Moreno Valley Unified School District, (1996) 936 F.Supp. 719*

ATTORNEY GENERAL OPINIONS

- 90 Ops. Cal. Atty. Gen. 47 (2007)*
- 76 Ops. Cal. Atty. Gen. 281 (1993)*
- 66 Ops. Cal. Atty. Gen. 336 (1983)*
- 63 Ops. Cal. Atty. Gen. 215 (1980)*
- 61 Ops. Cal. Atty. Gen. 243, 253 (1978)*
- 55 Ops. Cal. Atty. Gen. 26 (1972)*

Management Resources:

CSBA PUBLICATIONS

- Call to Order: A Blueprint for Great Board Meetings, 2015*
- The Brown Act: School Boards and Open Meeting Laws, rev. 2014*

ATTORNEY GENERAL PUBLICATIONS

- The Brown Act: Open Meetings for Legislative Bodies, 2003*

WEB SITES

- CSBA: <http://www.csba.org>*
- California Attorney General's Office: <http://oag.ca.gov>*