

MINGUS UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

1801 EAST FIR, COTTONWOOD, AZ 86326

GOVERNING BOARD MINUTES OF MEETING

Mingus Union High School
At Yavapai College
Board Retreat

Friday, March 27, 2026, 9:00 AM

Governing Board:

Ms. Taylor Bell
Mr. Frank Nevarez
Mr. Austin Babcock
Mr. Will David
Mr. Matthew Chavez

Also Present:

Superintendent Melody Herne
Board Secretary, Tari Garrison
Community Member, Pamela Leathers

I. Opening

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
 - President Bell – Here
 - Vice President Nevarez – Here
 - Member Babcock – Here
 - Member David – Here
 - Member Chavez – Here
3. Pledge of Allegiance
4. Moment of Silence

Motion to Adopt the Agenda as presented by Vice President Nevarez and seconded by Member Chavez:

- President Bell – Aye
- Vice President Nevarez – Aye
- Member Babcock – Yes
- Member David – Yes
- Member Chavez – Yes

Vote Passed: 5–0

Superintendent Herne introduced Dr. Michael Wright, who facilitated the Board Retreat. A summary of the topics discussed, along with the documents presented by Dr. Wright during the retreat, will be included at the end of the meeting minutes.

II. Information and Discussion Items

- Open Meeting Law
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Identify Standards and Rules of Conduct
 - o Standards of Communication
 - o Leadership Efficacy
 - o Conflict Management
- Board SMART Goals

The Board discussed preparation, communication, and how to improve the quality of meetings. Members emphasized that effective governance requires being prepared and actively contributing. A key concern was the need for better alignment and support for one another and the Superintendent. The Board also highlighted the importance of using the strategic plan to guide decisions and noted a need for clearer, shared priorities. It was suggested that identifying specific “areas of emphasis” would help provide clearer direction.

The Board also stressed the importance of teamwork, respect, and professionalism. Members recommended creating a clear code of conduct, such as not interrupting, staying on topic, and giving each other the benefit of the doubt. There was agreement on the need for more structured and efficient meetings, including better agenda management, fewer off-topic discussions, and shorter, more focused meetings. Members recognized that becoming a high-functioning Board takes effort, and that stronger communication and teamwork will lead to better outcomes and increased public trust.

Members discussed key elements of a Board code of conduct, including:

- Not interrupting and allowing speakers to finish
- Staying focused and avoiding unnecessary or off-topic comments
- Being mindful that not every thought needs to be shared if it derails discussion.
- The Board highlighted the importance of clear and intentional agenda setting, including limiting items, tabling discussions, and potentially addressing topics across multiple meetings when needed.

Members shared challenges in connecting with the community, especially those without school-aged children, and emphasized the need for more visibility through advertising and social media, including ideas such as creating a “Mingus fact sheet” or informational cards. Members noted that improving community perception requires direct experiences, such as inviting people to volunteer, attend events, and tour schools. Promoting specific programs, such as ATORT, was also discussed as a way to increase engagement.

The Board discussed the possibility of moving the “Call to the Public” to the end of meetings. Members also considered adjusting the time allowed if there is a large number of speakers and exploring the option of having a spokesperson represent a group rather than having each individual speak.

Dr. Wright recognized the Board on the progress made during the session. The Board expressed appreciation to Dr. Wright for facilitating the retreat and to Superintendent Herne for organizing the Board Retreat.

III. Adjournment

Motion to Adjourn the Meeting as presented by President Bell and seconded by Vice President Nevarez:

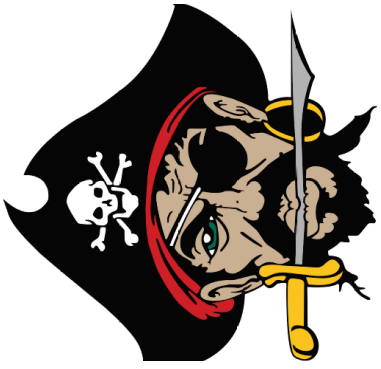
- President Bell – Aye
- Vice President Nevarez – Aye
- Member Babcock – Yes
- Member David – Yes
- Member Chavez – Yes

Vote Passed: 5–0

Adjournment Time: 2:40 PM



March 27, 2026
School Board
Retreat



Introductions

Mike Wright, Ed.D.

School Board
Members

Topics



- Arizona Open Meeting Law
- Roles & Responsibilities
- Reflective Activity
- Identify Standards & Rules of Conduct
- School Board SMART Goals



Arizona Open Meeting Law – Fundamentals

A.R.S. § 38-431(4) and § 38-431.01(A),



**PURPOSE:
TRANSPARENCY
AND PUBLIC TRUST**



**APPLIES TO ALL
SCHOOL BOARD
GATHERINGS**



**ALL LEGAL ACTION
MUST OCCUR IN
PUBLIC**

What's a Meeting?

A quorum (3 or more),
anywhere discussing
school business

Includes work- sessions,
retreats & parking lots

Includes electronic
communications & phone
calls

Retreat vs Action Meetings

Retreat: discussion only

General/Special/Work Session meetings:
vote allowed

Executive Session: Expectations,
limitations, and confidentiality
requirements

The agenda controls what MAY occur &
topics of discussion (free flow discussion
on unrelated topics violates Open
Meeting Law)

School
Board
Retreats
– Key
Rule

Retreats ARE meetings if
(3) or members are
present = quorum

OML applies regardless of
location, setting or
intentions

Social settings **do not**
create an exception

Retreats
– What's
allowed?

Strategic planning

Training &
information sharing

Discussion **without**
decisions or action

Retreat Best Practices

Post notice and
agenda

Discussion-only,
limited scope

Open Meeting Law
Reminder for Meeting

Board
Meetings
– What's
Permitted
?

Voting and/or
decision-making

Direction that
binds the board

Poling = decision-
making

Legal
Consequences
of Violations

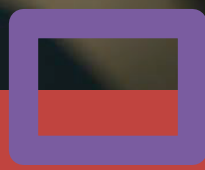
Actions may be null
and void

Civil fines & attorney
fees

Possible removal from
board or position



?



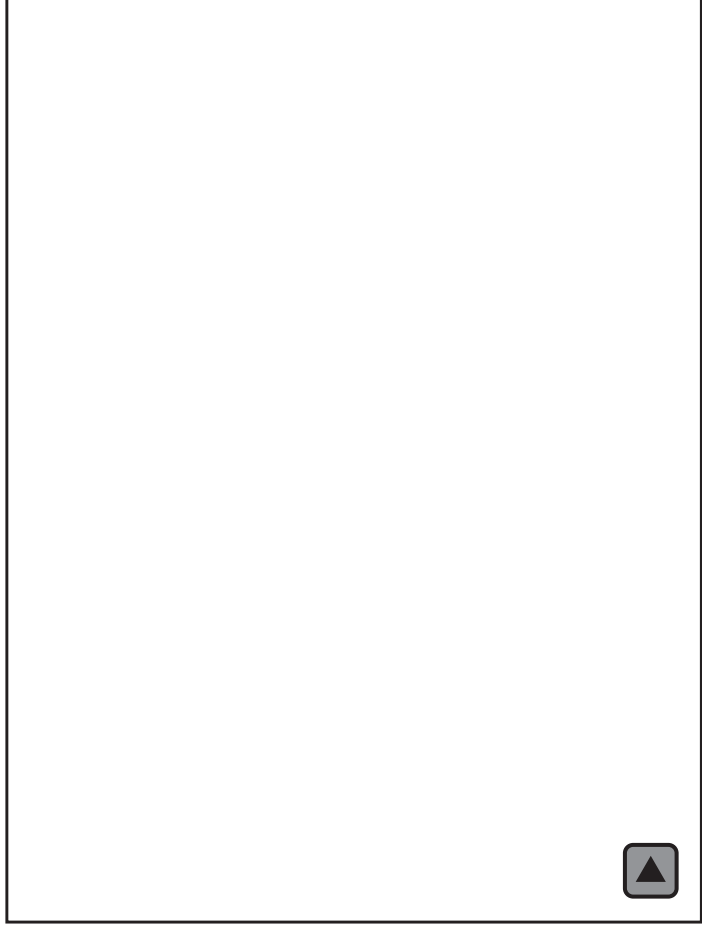
Questions?



District Governance Reflection Activity

Feedback & Discussion

Guided Discussion:
Finding Understanding without Seeking Blame.



Identify
Possible
Rules of
Conduct

**NO VOTING,
POLLING, OR
DECISION-MAKING**

**IDEAS & POSSIBLE
RULES OF CONDUCT**

**DISCUSS AT THE
UPCOMING BOARD
MEETING**

Activity
Brainstorming Activity– to identify possible
Rules of Conduct



Interactive Notetaking
Identify and List possible *Rules of Conduct*

Future Agenda Item- Review and
Agreement of *Rules of Conduct*



A large, solid red oval with a white border, centered on a white background. Inside the oval, the text "Review of Board Goals 2026" is written in white, with "Goals 2026" underlined.

Review of Board Goals 2026

2026 Board Approved SMART Goals

Success in completing the 2026 SMART Goals will be dependent on utilizing the

Rules of Conduct

- **SMART Goal I-- Training/Professional Development**
- To increase our knowledge of Board Member's Roles and Responsibilities, Board Members will attend at least three (3) professional developments during the 2026 Calendar Year, tracking our progress by sharing during Board Reports at the Regular or Work Session meetings
- **SMART Goal II-- Strategic Plan**
- To guide/drive the work of Mingus Union High School District #4, the Governing Board will review, provide feedback, and adopt a Strategic Plan by March 2026. The Board will monitor the plan throughout 2026 by reviewing Dashboard data at least three times during the year at Board Meetings
- **SMART Goal III—Trust and Communication**
- To increase trust and communication amongst the Governance Team, Board Members will attend regular one-to-ones and collaborative sessions (at least two a month) during calendar year 2026. This will be measured/reported in the Dashboard data.



Thank you!

Dr.mikewrightusa@gmail.com

Mike Wright 480.686.0792

Arizona Open Meeting Law Compliance Checklist

Before the Retreat

1. Agenda clearly states, 'Discussion Only – No Legal Action Will Be Taken.'
2. Agenda item description is specific (e.g., Board Member Code of Conduct)
3. Meeting notice posted at least 24 hours in advance
4. Draft materials prepared and labeled as discussion drafts

During Retreat

1. Chair/President states on the record that the item is discussion-only
2. No motions, votes, straw polls, or consensus statements occur
3. Discussion stays within agenda scope
4. No polling or headcounts by Chair/President or members

Retreat Minutes

1. Minutes reflect discussion only
2. Minutes explicitly state, 'No legal action was taken.'
3. Avoid words like 'agreed', 'decided', or 'consensus.'
4. If applicable, note the directions to staff to prepare a draft

Between Meetings

1. No serial communications among a quorum
2. No reply-all emails discussing the substance
3. Agenda preparation (Policy BEDB) by Superintendent with input from Board Members and Board President
4. Action Meeting Preparation—District Staff and School Board Members
5. Agenda item includes 'Discussion and Possible Action'
6. Final Agenda --BoardBook
7. Public notice posted at least 24 hours in advance

Action Meeting = Regularly Scheduled School Board Meeting (General or Work Session)

1. Board Member discussion on agenda items
2. Motion is made and seconded
3. Vote occurs in open session
4. The vote is recorded for each member

SMART Goal I-- Training/Professional Development

To increase our knowledge of Board Member's Roles and Responsibilities, Board Members will attend at least three (3) professional developments during the 2026 Calendar Year, tracking our progress by sharing during Board Reports at the Regular or Work Session meetings

SMART Goal II-- Strategic Plan

To guide/drive the work of Mingus Union High School District #4, the Governing Board will review, provide feedback, and adopt a Strategic Plan by March 2026. The Board will monitor the plan throughout 2026 by reviewing Dashboard data at least three times during the year at Board Meetings

SMART Goal III—Trust and Communication

To increase trust and communication amongst the Governance Team, Board Members will attend regular one-to-ones and collaborative sessions (at least two a month) during calendar year 2026. This will be measured/reported in the Dashboard data.

BEDB © AGENDA

The agenda shall list the specific matters to be discussed, considered or decided at the meeting. Except for a meeting through technological devices, the agenda shall also include the time that the public will have physical access to the meeting place. The Governing Board may discuss, consider or make decisions only on matters listed on the agenda and other matters related thereto. (*Subject to A.R.S. [38-431.02](#)*)

Preparation and Dissemination

Regular Meetings

The Superintendent will prepare Board meeting agendas in consultation with the Board President.

The Superintendent may place items on the agenda. Any Board member may propose an item for consideration of placement on the agenda and will notify the Superintendent of the particular item of business at least five (5) working days before the meeting.

The agenda and supporting materials shall be distributed to the Board members not less than twenty-four (24) hours prior to the meeting.

Copies of the agenda shall be available to the public and the press.

Special Meetings

Whenever possible, the procedures for agenda preparation and dissemination used for regular meetings will be used for special meetings.

These procedures may be altered by the Superintendent during an emergency or when compliance would be impractical. However, the Superintendent shall comply with all legal requirements in scheduling special meetings.

Order of Business

Unless changed by a majority vote of Board members present at a meeting, the order of business shall be as follows:

Regular meetings:

- A. Call to order
- B. Adoption of the agenda (*Discussion of items is not in order.*)
- C. Pledge of allegiance
- D. Board Meeting minutes not previously approved
- E. Information only items (*Items to be heard only; the Board will not propose, discuss, or take legal action during the meeting unless the specific matter is properly noticed for legal action.*)
 1. Summary of current events
 - a. Superintendent

Celebrations and recognitions

b. Governing Board members

2. Reports (*Notice must be specific as to type of report that will be given, subject matter and whom will be making the report.*)

F. Public comments (*Members of the Governing Board shall not discuss or take legal action on matters raised during an open call to the public unless the matters are properly noticed for discussion and legal action.*)

G. Action items (*Matters on which the Governing Board may take legal action during the meeting.*)

1. Consent agenda items (*When so presented, should fully describe the matters on the agenda and inform the public where more information can be obtained.*)

2. Specific items of District business (*As listed for consideration, may include various categorical areas as the business of the District necessitates Board discussion, deliberation, and action.*)

H. Information and Discussion items (*Matters about which the Board may engage in discussion but will take no action during the meeting.*)

I. Information items (*The Board will not propose, discuss, or take legal action during the meeting.*)

Requests for future agenda items

J. Adjournment

Special meetings:

A. Call to order

B. Items for which the special meeting was called (*May include timely action, discussion, and information items as conditioned for regular meetings.*)

C. Announcements

D. Adjournment

Executive sessions:

An executive session may be scheduled, as necessary, during either a regular or special meeting. (*See Arizona Attorney General Agency Handbook Section 7.6.7.*)

1. When an executive session is to be held, the notice must state the specific provision of law authorizing the executive session. An agenda is also required and must contain a general description of the matters to be considered.

2. The following statement may be included on every agenda:

"The Board may vote to hold an executive session for the purpose of obtaining legal advice from the Board's attorney on any matter listed on the agenda pursuant to A.R.S. [38-431.03\(A\)\(3\)](#)."

Emergency meetings

In the case of an actual emergency, the Governing Board, after giving such notice as is appropriate to the circumstances, may act on an emergency matter or call an emergency meeting in accordance with the requirements set out in A.R.S. [38-431.02](#). The emergency meeting shall follow the order of business for a special meeting. An emergency meeting shall be subsequently followed by the posting of a public notice within twenty-four (24) hours declaring that an emergency session has been held and setting forth the information specified by A.R.S. [38-431.02](#). Chapter 7 of the Arizona Agency Handbook shall be consulted for guidance when an emergency action or meeting is being considered.

Accommodations for Individual with Disabilities

Persons with a disability may request a reasonable accommodation, such as a sign language interpreter, by contacting the District Office at 928-634-8901. Requests should be made as early as possible to allow time to arrange the accommodation.

Adopted: Thursday, June 12, 2025

LEGAL REF.:

A.R.S.

[38-431](#)

[38-431.01](#)

[38-431.02](#)

[38-431.03](#)

28 CFR § 35.163

7.6.7 AZ Agency Handbook

CROSS REF.:

[BDA](#) - Board Organizational Meeting and Board President Duties

[BE](#) - School Board Meetings