

District 97 Board of Education Meeting Management Protocol

Purpose

Provide an outline for effective and efficient meeting management.

Goals

- Increase transparency and accountability to the public
- Increase effectiveness and efficiency of meetings
- Increase board and administration time and energy for non-board meeting activities
- Allow for recognition of staff and partnership organizations

Introduction

Historically, Board meetings have been very long, often ending later than 11 p.m. Shorter meetings would help increase public attendance at Board meetings. This increase in attendance will exhibit transparency and accountability of District 97 business to the community. Lengthy meetings also result in both Staff and Board fatigue and therefore decreased productivity. Finally, more time and energy can be committed to the engagement with and outreach to the community, which is a vital part of the Board's responsibility.

Meeting Essentials

The Board must essentially serve four broad purposes through its meetings:

- Meet legal obligations
- Acquire information to inform the Board's decision-making capabilities*
- Set strategic direction of the District*
- Recognize staff and partner organizations to celebrate their successes.

* Purposes two and three above address specific areas such as personnel, operations, curriculum, and policies and protocols.

Board Meeting Outline

- Executive Session
- Public Comment
- Action and Discussion
- District and Board Activity and Priorities
- Concluding Items
- Adjournment

Other Meetings

- Scheduled or Ad-hoc Study Sessions
- Topic-Driven Outreach

Meeting Essentials: The Board must essentially serve four broad purposes through its meetings.

1. Approve Legal Obligations, including but not limited to:
 - a. Bill list
 - b. All hires
 - c. Meeting minutes
 - d. Budgets
 - e. Levy
 - f. Policies and protocols
 - g. Contracts
 - h. Student expulsions
 - i. Acceptance of audit
2. Acquire information for Board decision making, including but not limited to:.*
 - a. Public comment
 - b. Organizational reports
 - c. Administrative reports
 - d. Committee reports (annual, other)
 - e. Additional reports to inform the Board of issues not required for action at that meeting
 - f. Discussion aimed at proactively understanding the public's perspective
3. Set over all direction of the District and through the Strategic Plan: Impacts the agreed upon priorities for D97 over the next three years.*
4. Recognition of staff, students and partner organizations to celebrate their successes.

* Specific areas under items 2. and 3. include, but are not limited to:

- a. Personnel (hiring, dismissal, staffing targets, collective bargaining, etc.)
- b. Operations (budget, technology, facilities, etc.)
- c. Curriculum (materials and courses of study, text adoption, student/teacher ratios, priorities, etc.)
- d. Policy and Protocol: Continuously reviewing new and existing policies and protocols to guide the operation of the District and Board.

Board Meetings

Meetings should be conducted as follows with recognition that time limits for specific items may change from meeting to meeting.

Action Meetings (4.5 hours: 6 p.m. to 10:30 p.m.)

1. **Executive Sessions** (60 minutes; when necessary):
 - a. Identify lengthy discussion items (e.g., negotiations, evaluations) at start of year to schedule separate or dedicated Executive Session
 - b. Record timing of session items in minutes for periodic review
 - c. Executive Session continuations following open session should occur only when the topic may not be held until the next meeting.

2. Public Segment (25 minutes): Order may be rearranged as needed.

- a. Public Hearings
- b. Student Presentations
- c. Special Reports
- d. Public Comment

3. District Business – Items for Action (15 minutes)

- a. Approve previous meeting minutes
- b. Consent agenda items for Action
- c. Action items**
- d. Preview/approve time allocated agenda

4. District and Board Activity and Priorities - Items for Discussion (2 hours)

Board members:

- will have access to all presentations in advance of the meeting
- should be prepared for discussion

Board presentations should be provided to community members in attendance whenever possible.

- a. Review time projections – adjust times or table items in priority order as necessary
- b. Final recommendation review before approval: expected outcome is an Action item at next meeting**
- c. Preliminary recommendation review: Expected possible outcome(s)
 1. Move to final recommendation
 2. Send back to committee
 3. Create or send back to work group/team
 4. Table for the foreseeable future
- d. Topic report: Expected possible outcome(s)
 1. Create or send back to committee
 2. Create or send back to work group/team
 3. Set priority for the administration
 4. Request additional information
 5. Table for the foreseeable future

4. Review time spent versus schedule

5. Concluding Items (20 minutes)

- a. Superintendent Report
- b. Board Concerns
- c. Board Response to Public Comment
- d. Board Announcements

6. Adjournment

****Action Items**

1. For greater transparency and accountability, approval of an action item should not occur on the same night it has been introduced. Initial discussion must occur at least one meeting before action is taken to allow for reflection, evaluation and input from stakeholders.
2. Action items should normally be approved quickly and routinely when brought to the table, unless additional information has been presented that requires discussion.
3. Upon taking action, the Board needs to ensure public understanding that action items were not discussed at the table because the discussion has already taken place.

4. All action by the Board must be approved at an Open Meeting; informal polls (straw polls) to determine Board direction should never be taken outside of a posted meeting.
5. Recommendations requiring significant board input should occur at multiple meetings (e.g. First Readings).
 - a. This provides presenter time to review the action item before presenting a final recommendation.

Other scheduled Board meetings

1. **Scheduled or Ad-hoc Study Sessions:** allow the Board to have planned focused time to discuss complex issues of particular importance to District 97. Topics are to be set by Board agreement, ideally before the beginning of the school year and incorporated into the Board calendar. Examples: budget/finance, Superintendent Evaluation (in Executive Session), Board self-evaluation, student achievement.

Topic-driven Outreach Sessions: allow for public participation and may be in addition to scheduled Board meetings. Examples: Public Forums, Town Halls, Listening Sessions