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# CSBA Sample Board Bylaw

## Board Bylaws

BB 9320(a)

### MEETINGS AND NOTICES

Meetings of the Governing Board are conducted for the purpose of accomplishing district business. In accordance with state open meeting laws (Brown Act), the Board shall hold its meetings in public and shall conduct closed sessions during such meetings only as authorized by law. To encourage community involvement in the schools, Board meetings shall provide opportunities for questions and comments by members of the public. All meetings shall be conducted in accordance with law and the Board's bylaws, policies, and administrative regulations.

*(cf. 9321 - Closed Session)*

*(cf. 9322 - Agenda/Meeting Materials)*

*(cf. 9323 - Meeting Conduct)*

A Board meeting exists whenever a majority of Board members gather at the same time and location, including teleconference location as permitted by Government Code 54953, to hear, discuss, deliberate, or take action upon any item within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Board or district. (Government Code 54952.2)

Note: The Brown Act prohibits serial meetings, defined under Government Code 54952.2 as a series of communications of any kind, directly or through intermediaries, to discuss, deliberate, or take action on any item of district business.

This prohibition against serial meetings also applies to communications via technology. Email exchanges, chat room threads, or comments posted on a blog or social media account that result in a majority of the Governing Board "discussing among themselves" an item within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Board could result in a Brown Act violation. Pursuant to Government Code 54952.2, as amended by AB 992 (Ch. 89, Statutes of 2020) Board members may engage in separate conversations or communications with members of the public on an Internet-based social media platform that is open and accessible to the public as long as a majority of the Board does not use the platform to discuss among themselves business within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Board and members do not comment on or use digital icons (e.g., "likes" or emojis) to express reactions to communications made by other Board members. Consequently, a Board member is prohibited from responding directly to any communication from other members of the Board on a social media platform regarding matters that are within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Board. See BB 9012 Board Member Electronic Communications.

In 84 Ops. Cal. Atty. Gen. 30 (2001), the Attorney General opined that Government Code 54952.2 prohibits a majority of the Board from sending emails to each other to develop a collective concurrence as to action to be taken by the Board even if the emails are (1) sent to the secretary and chairperson, (2) posted on the district's web site, and (3) distributed (in a printed version) at the next meeting. Although the Attorney General recognized that those three conditions would allow the deliberations to be conducted, to some extent, "in public," the emails were prohibited by the Brown Act because all debate would be completed before the meeting and members of the public who did not have Internet access would be excluded from the debate.

**MEETINGS AND NOTICES** (continued)

A majority of the Board shall not, outside of an authorized meeting, use a series of communications of any kind, directly or through intermediaries, including social media and other electronic communications, to discuss, deliberate, or take action on any item that is within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Board. (Government Code 54952.2)

Note: Government Code 54952.2 specifies that briefings between staff and Board members are permissible in order to answer questions or to provide information, as long as the briefing is not used to communicate the comments or position of any other Board member.

However, an employee or district official may engage in separate conversations or communications with Board members in order to answer questions or provide information regarding an item within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Board, as long as that employee or district official does not communicate the comments or position of any Board members to other Board members. (Government Code 54952.2)

(cf. 9012 - Board Member Electronic Communications)

Note: Government Code 54953.2 requires that all Board meetings meet the protections of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) (42 USC 12132) and implementing regulations (28 CFR 35.160, 36.303). Such protections require the district to ensure that the meeting is accessible to persons with disabilities and, upon request, to provide disability-related accommodations, such as auxiliary aids and services. Auxiliary aids and services may include accommodations at the actual meeting, such as a sign-language interpreter, or accommodations to the supporting documentation, such as Braille translation of the agenda packet. Government Code 54954.2 requires that the agenda specify how, when, and to whom a request for accommodation should be made; see BB 9322 - Agenda/Meeting Materials.

In order to help ensure the participation of individuals with disabilities at Board meetings, the Superintendent or designee shall provide appropriate disability-related accommodations or modifications upon request in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. (Government Code 54953.2, 54954.1, 54954.2)

**Regular Meetings**

Note: Education Code 35140 and Government Code 54954 **mandate** the Board to fix the time and place for its regular meetings by rule and regulation.

The Board shall hold \_\_\_\_\_ regular meeting(s) each month. Regular meetings shall be held at \_\_\_\_\_ p.m. on the \_\_\_\_\_ (day) at the \_\_\_\_\_.

Note: Pursuant to Government Code 54954.2, the agenda for a regular meeting must be posted at least 72 hours prior to the meeting, at a location that is freely accessible to the public. Government Code 54954.2 also requires that the agenda be posted on the district's web site, if it has one. Any district that does not have a web site should delete the reference to it in the following paragraph.

The Attorney General has determined in 78 Ops. Cal. Atty. Gen. 327 (1995) that weekend hours may be counted as part of the 72-hour period for posting of the agenda prior to a regular meeting. In the same opinion, the Attorney General found that the term "freely accessible" requires that the agenda be posted in a

## MEETINGS AND NOTICES (continued)

location where it can be read by the public at any time during the 72 hours immediately preceding the meeting. For example, if a building where the agenda is posted is closed during the evening hours, the agenda must also be posted in a location accessible during evening hours, such as a lighted display case outside of the building. The Attorney General also opined in 88 Ops.Cal.Atty.Gen. 218 (2005) that the agenda may be posted on a touch screen electronic kiosk, in lieu of a paper copy on a bulletin board, as long as the kiosk is accessible without charge to the public 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

At least 72 hours prior to a regular meeting, the agenda shall be posted at one or more locations freely accessible to members of the public and on the district's web site. (Government Code 54954.2)

(cf. 1113 - District and School Web Sites)

Note: Pursuant to Government Code 54957.5, the agenda must list any address where the public can inspect agenda materials that are distributed to Board members less than 72 hours before a regular meeting; see BB 9322 - Agenda/Meeting Materials. In addition, pursuant to the California Public Records Act (Government Code 6252-6270), agenda materials related to an open session of a Board's regular meeting are "public records" and are subject to the inspection of any member of the public. For a list of documents subject to disclosure by the district, see BP/AR 1340 - Access to District Records.

Whenever agenda materials relating to an open session of a regular meeting are distributed to the Board less than 72 hours before the meeting, the Superintendent or designee shall make the materials available for public inspection at a public office or location designated for that purpose at the time the materials are distributed to all or a majority of the Board. (Government Code 54957.5)

(cf. 1340 - Access to District Records)

### Special Meetings

Note: Education Code 35144 and Government Code 54956 allow the Board to hold special meetings to address any matter that requires timely action. For example, the Board may hold a special meeting to discuss the need for an emergency state apportionment when the district is in financial distress; see BP 3460 - Financial Reports and Accountability. However, pursuant to Government Code 54956, certain specified matters, as described below, may not be addressed in a special meeting.

Special meetings of the Board may be called at any time by the presiding officer or a majority of the Board members. However, a special meeting shall not be called regarding the salary, salary schedule, or other compensation of the Superintendent, assistant superintendent, or other management employee as described in Government Code 3511.1. (Government Code 54956)

(cf. 2121 - Superintendent's Contract)

**MEETINGS AND NOTICES** (continued)

Note: Pursuant to Government Code 54956, written notice of a special meeting may be delivered personally or by other means, including email or fax. Government Code 54956 requires any district that has its own web site to also post the notice on its web site. Any district that does not have its own web site should delete reference to it in the following paragraph.

Written notice of special meetings shall be delivered personally or by any other means to all Board members and the local media who have requested such notice in writing. The notice also shall be posted on the district's web site. The notice shall be received at least 24 hours before the time of the meeting. The notice shall also be posted at least 24 hours before the meeting in a location freely accessible to the public. The notice shall specify the time and location of the meeting and the business to be transacted or discussed. No other business shall be considered at this meeting. (Education Code 35144; Government Code 54956)

Any Board member may waive the 24-hour written notice requirement prior to the time of the meeting by filing a written waiver of notice with the clerk or secretary of the Board or by being present at the meeting at the time it convenes. (Education Code 35144; Government Code 54956)

Every notice of a special meeting shall provide an opportunity for members of the public to directly address the Board concerning any item that has been described in the meeting notice, before or during the item's consideration. (Government Code 54954.3)

**Emergency Meetings**

Note: Government Code 54956.5 authorizes a closed session during emergency meetings, as long as two-thirds of the members present at the meeting agree on the need for the closed session or, if less than two-thirds of the members are present, by unanimous vote of the members present. See BB 9321 - Closed Session and E(1) 9323.2 - Actions by the Board.

In the case of an *emergency situation* for which prompt action is necessary due to the disruption or threatened disruption of public facilities, the Board may hold an emergency meeting without complying with the 24-hour notice and/or 24-hour posting requirement for special meetings pursuant to Government Code 54956. The Board shall comply with all other requirements for special meetings during an emergency meeting. (Government Code 54956.5)

An *emergency situation* means either of the following: (Government Code 54956.5)

1. An emergency, which shall be defined as a work stoppage, crippling activity, or other activity that severely impairs public health and/or safety as determined by a majority of the members of the Board

(cf. 4141.6/4241.6 - Concerted Action/Work Stoppage)

## MEETINGS AND NOTICES (continued)

2. A dire emergency, which shall be defined as a crippling disaster, mass destruction, terrorist act, or threatened terrorist activity that poses peril so immediate and significant that requiring the Board to provide one-hour notice before holding an emergency meeting may endanger the public health and/or safety as determined by a majority of the members of the Board

*(cf. 3516 - Emergencies and Disaster Preparedness Plan)*

Except in the case of a dire emergency, the Board president or designee shall give notice of the emergency meeting by telephone at least one hour before the meeting to the local media that have requested notice of special meetings. All telephone numbers provided by the media in the most recent request for notification must be exhausted. If telephone services are not functioning, the notice requirement of one hour is waived and, as soon after the meeting as possible, the Board shall notify those media representatives of the meeting and shall describe the purpose of the meeting and any action taken by the Board. In the case of a dire emergency, the Board president or designee shall give such notice at or near the time notification is given to the other members of the Board about the meeting. (Government Code 54956.5)

The minutes of the meeting, a list of persons the Board president or designee notified or attempted to notify, a copy of the roll call vote, and any actions taken at the meeting shall be posted for at least 10 days in a public place as soon after the meeting as possible. (Government Code 54956.5)

### Adjourned/Continued Meetings

The Board may adjourn/continue any regular or special meeting to a later time and location that shall be specified in the order of adjournment. Less than a quorum of the Board may adjourn such a meeting. If no Board members are present, the secretary or the clerk may declare the meeting adjourned to a later time and place and shall give notice in the same manner required for special meetings. (Government Code 54955)

Within 24 hours after the time of adjournment, a copy of the order or notice of adjournment/continuance shall be conspicuously posted on or near the door of the place where the meeting was held. (Government Code 54955)

### Study Sessions, Retreats, Public Forums, and Discussion Meetings

Note: The following section is **optional** and may be revised to reflect district practice. Pursuant to Government Code 54954.2, the Board must still comply with the public notice requirements when holding a study session, retreat, public forum or other such meeting.

The Board may occasionally convene a study session or public forum to study an issue in more detail or to receive information from staff or feedback from members of the public.

## MEETINGS AND NOTICES (continued)

The Board may also convene a retreat or discussion meeting to discuss Board roles and relationships.

*(cf. 2000 - Concepts and Roles)*

*(cf. 2111 - Superintendent Governance Standards)*

*(cf. 9000 - Role of the Board)*

*(cf. 9005 - Governance Standards)*

*(cf. 9400 - Board Self-Evaluation)*

Public notice shall be given in accordance with law when a quorum of the Board is attending a study session, retreat, public forum, or discussion meeting. All such meetings shall comply with the Brown Act and shall be held in open session and within district boundaries. Action items shall not be included on the agenda for these meetings.

### Other Gatherings

Attendance by a majority of Board members at any of the following events is not subject to the Brown Act provided that a majority of the Board members do not discuss specific district business among themselves other than as part of the scheduled program: (Government Code 54952.2)

1. A conference or similar public gathering open to the public that involves a discussion of issues of general interest to the public or to school board members
2. An open, publicized meeting organized by a person or organization other than the district to address a topic of local community concern
3. An open and noticed meeting of another body of the district
4. An open and noticed meeting of a legislative body of another local agency
5. A purely social or ceremonial occasion
6. An open and noticed meeting of a standing committee of the Board, provided that the Board members who are not members of the standing committee attend only as observers

*(cf. 9130 - Board Committees)*

Individual contacts or conversations between a Board member and any other person are not subject to the Brown Act. (Government Code 54952.2)



**MEETINGS AND NOTICES** (continued)**Location of Meetings**

Meetings shall not be held in a facility that prohibits the admittance of any person on the basis of ancestry or any characteristic listed in Government Code 11135. In addition, meetings shall not be held in a facility which is inaccessible to individuals with disabilities or where members of the public must make a payment or purchase in order to be admitted. (Government Code 54961)

*(cf. 0410 - Nondiscrimination in District Programs and Activities)*

Meetings shall be held within district boundaries, except to do any of the following: (Government Code 54954)

1. Comply with state or federal law or court order or attend a judicial or administrative proceeding to which the district is a party
2. Inspect real or personal property which cannot conveniently be brought into the district, provided that the topic of the meeting is limited to items directly related to the property
3. Participate in meetings or discussions of multiagency significance, provided these meetings are held within one of the other agencies' boundaries, with all participating agencies giving the notice required by law
4. Meet in the closest meeting facility if the district has no meeting facility within its boundaries or if its principal office is located outside the district
5. Meet with elected or appointed state or federal officials when a local meeting would be impractical, solely to discuss legislative or regulatory issues affecting the district over which the state or federal officials have jurisdiction
6. Meet in or near a facility owned by the district but located outside the district, provided the meeting agenda is limited to items directly related to that facility
7. Visit the office of the district's legal counsel for a closed session on pending litigation, when doing so would reduce legal fees or costs
8. Attend conferences on nonadversarial collective bargaining techniques
9. Interview residents of another district regarding the Board's potential employment of an applicant for Superintendent of the district
10. Interview a potential employee from another district

**MEETINGS AND NOTICES** (continued)

Meetings exempted from the boundary requirements, as specified in items #1-10 above, shall still be subject to the notice and open meeting requirements for regular and special meetings when a quorum of the Board attends the meeting.

If a fire, flood, earthquake, or other emergency renders the regular meeting place unsafe, meetings shall be held for the duration of the emergency at a location designated by the Board president or designee, who shall so inform all news media who have requested notice of special meetings by the most rapid available means of communication. (Government Code 54954)

**Teleconferencing**

A teleconference is a meeting of the Board in which Board members are in different locations, connected by electronic means through audio and/or video. (Government Code 54953)

The Board may use teleconferences for all purposes in connection with any meeting within the Board's subject matter jurisdiction. All votes taken during a teleconference meeting shall be by roll call. (Government Code 54953)

During the teleconference, at least a quorum of the members of the Board shall participate from locations within district boundaries. (Government Code 54953)

Agendas shall be posted at all teleconference locations and shall list all teleconference locations whenever they are posted elsewhere. Additional teleconference locations may be provided to the public. (Government Code 54953)

Note: In 84 Ops. Cal. Atty. Gen. 181 (2001), the Attorney General opined that a city is not required under the ADA to provide, as an accommodation for city council member with disabilities who was unable to attend a regularly scheduled meeting, a teleconference connection to the member's house where the public would not be permitted to be present. According to the Attorney General, Government Code 54953 requires that members of the public be permitted to be present at any teleconference location.

All teleconference locations shall be accessible to the public. All teleconferenced meetings shall be conducted in a manner that protects the statutory and constitutional rights of the parties or the public appearing before the Board, including the right of the public to address the Board directly at each teleconference location. (Government Code 54953)

**Teleconferencing During a Proclaimed State of Emergency**

Note: Pursuant to Government Code 54953, as amended by AB 361 (Ch. 165, Statutes of 2021), boards are authorized, until January 1, 2024, to conduct board meetings by teleconference as specified below when holding a board meeting during a proclaimed state of emergency pursuant to Government Code 8625-8629



**MEETINGS AND NOTICES (continued)**

when any of the following circumstance exist: (1) state or local officials have imposed or recommended measures to promote social distancing; (2) to determine whether, as a result of an emergency, meeting in person would present imminent risks to the health or safety of attendees; or (3) when it has been determined, as a result of an emergency, that meeting in person would impose such risks.

While a resolution is not required by law to make findings required by Government Code 54953, as amended by AB 361, CSBA offers sample resolutions available on its web site for (1) recognizing a state of emergency and authorizing teleconferenced meetings and (2) recognizing a state of emergency and re-authorizing teleconferenced meetings. CSBA recommends that if resolutions are not utilized, the motion and findings to authorize or reauthorize emergency teleconferenced meetings are included in the meeting minutes.

The Board may conduct Board meetings by teleconference without posting agendas at all teleconference locations, identifying teleconference locations on meeting notices and agendas, allowing public access to each teleconference location, providing an opportunity for members of the public to address the Board directly at each teleconference location, and ensuring that at least a quorum of the Board participate from locations within district boundaries, during a proclaimed state of emergency pursuant to Government Code 8625-8629 in any of the following circumstances: (Government Code 54953)

1. State or local officials have imposed or recommended measures to promote social distancing
2. For the purpose of determining, by majority vote, whether as the result of the emergency meeting in person would present imminent risks to the health or safety of attendees
3. When it has been determined, by majority vote as described in Item #2 above, that as a result of the emergency meeting in person would present imminent risks to the health or safety of attendees

To conduct a teleconference meeting for these purposes the following requirements shall be satisfied: (Government Code 54953)

1. The notice and agenda shall be given and posted as otherwise required by the Brown Act
2. The notice and agenda of the meeting shall specify the means by which members of the public may access the meeting and offer public comments, including via a call-in or internet-based service option

Members of the public may be required to register to log in to a meeting when making public comments through an internet web site or other online platform that is operated by a third-party and not under the control of the Board.

**MEETINGS AND NOTICES** (continued)

3. Members of the public shall be allowed to access the meeting, and the agenda shall provide an opportunity for members of the public to address the Board directly pursuant to Government Code 54954.3
4. Members of the public shall not be required to submit public comments in advance of a Board meeting and shall be provided an opportunity to address the Board and offer comments in real time
5. Public comment periods shall not be closed until the timed public comment period, if such is offered by the Board, has elapsed or, if not timed, until a reasonable amount of time per agenda item has been allowed
6. If during a Board meeting a disruption occurs which prevents the district from broadcasting the meeting to members of the public or for members of the public to offer public comments, the Board shall take no further action on any agenda item until public access via the call-in or internet-based service option to the meeting is restored

*(cf. 9323.2 - Actions by the Board)*

The district may, in its discretion, provide a physical location from which the public may attend or comment. (Government Code 54953)

The Board may continue to conduct meetings by teleconference, as specified above for teleconferencing during proclaimed states of emergency, by a majority vote finding within 30 days after teleconferencing for the first time, and every 30 days thereafter, that either: (Government Code 54953)

1. The state of emergency continues to directly impact the ability of the Board to meet safely in person
2. State or local officials continue to impose or recommend measures to promote social distancing

*Legal Reference: (see next page)*

## MEETINGS AND NOTICES (continued)

### *Legal Reference:*

#### EDUCATION CODE

- 35140 *Time and place of meetings*
- 35143 *Annual organizational meeting, date, and notice*
- 35144 *Special meeting*
- 35145 *Public meetings*
- 35145.5 *Agenda; public participation; regulations*
- 35146 *Closed sessions in connection with a student*
- 35147 *Open meeting law exceptions and applications*

#### GOVERNMENT CODE

- 3511.1 *Local agency executives*
- 6252-6270 *California Public Records Act*
- 8625-8629 *California Emergency Services Act*
- 11135 *State programs and activities; prohibition of discrimination*
- 54950-54963 *The Ralph M. Brown Act, especially:*
- 54953 *Meetings to be open and public; attendance; teleconference*
- 54954 *Time and place of regular meetings*
- 54954.2 *Agenda posting requirements, board actions*
- 54956 *Special meetings; call; notice*
- 54956.5 *Emergency meetings*

#### UNITED STATES CODE, TITLE 42

- 12101-12213 *Americans with Disabilities Act*

#### CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS, TITLE 28

- 35.160 *Effective communications for individuals with disabilities*
- 36.303 *Auxiliary aids and services for individuals with disabilities*

#### COURT DECISIONS

Garnier v. Poway Unified School District (S.D. Cal. September 26, 2019) No. 17-cv-2215-W (JLB), 2019 WL 4736208

Knight First Amendment Institute at Columbia University v. Trump (2019) 928 F.3d 226

Wolfe v. City of Fremont (2006) 144 Cal.App. 4th 533

#### ATTORNEY GENERAL OPINIONS

- 88 Ops. Cal. Atty. Gen. 218 (2005)
- 84 Ops. Cal. Atty. Gen. 181 (2001)
- 84 Ops. Cal. Atty. Gen. 30 (2001)
- 79 Ops. Cal. Atty. Gen. 69 (1996)
- 78 Ops. Cal. Atty. Gen. 327 (1995)

Management Resources continued: (see next page)

## MEETINGS AND NOTICES (continued)

### *Management Resources:*

#### CSBA PUBLICATIONS

*The Brown Act: School Boards and Open Meeting Laws*, rev. 2019

#### INSTITUTE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS

*The ABCs of Open Government Laws*

#### LEAGUE OF CALIFORNIA CITIES PUBLICATIONS

*Open and Public V: A Guide to the Ralph M. Brown Act*, 2016

#### WEB SITES

CSBA: <http://www.csba.org>

CSBA, GAMUT Meetings:

<http://www.csba.org/ProductsAndServices/AllServices/GamutMeetingsPolicy>

California Attorney General's Office: <http://oag.ca.gov/home>

Institute for Local Government: <http://www.ca-ilg.org>

League of California Cities: <http://www.cacities.org>

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