

Meetings And Notices

Meetings of the Governing Board are conducted for the purpose of accomplishing district business.

A Board meeting exists whenever a majority of Board members gather at the same time and place to hear, discuss or deliberate upon any item within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Board or district. (Government Code 54952.2)

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 Board-adopted bylaws, policies, and administrative regulations.

(cf. 9321 - Closed Session Purposes and Agendas)

(cf. 9321.1 - Closed Session Actions and Reports)

(cf. 9322 - Agenda/Meeting Materials)

(cf. 9323 - Meeting Conduct)

A majority of the Board shall not, outside of an authorized meeting use a series of communications of any kind, directly or through personal intermediaries, and technological devices to discuss, deliberate, or develop a collective concurrence as to an action that members will take on any item of district business that is within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Board. However, an employee or district official may engage in separate conversations 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 the employee or district official does not communicate the comments or position of any Board member to other Board members. (Government Code 54952.2)

Location of Meetings

Meetings shall not be held in a facility that prohibits the admittance to any person on the basis of ancestry or any characteristic listed in Government Code 11135, including, but not limited to, religion, sex, or sexual orientation.

Meetings shall be held within district boundaries, except when otherwise allowed by law 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 non-adversarial 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 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.

Meetings shall be held in a facility that is accessible to all persons, including disabled persons, without charge. (Government Code 54961)

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

In order to help ensure participation in the meeting by disabled individuals, 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)

Meeting notices and agendas shall specify that individuals who require special accommodation, including but not limited to an American sign language interpreter, accessible seating or documentation in accessible formats, should contact the Superintendent or designee at least two days before the meeting date.

Regular Meetings

The Board shall adopt a schedule specifying the date, time and place of its regular meetings. (Education Code 35140)

The Board shall hold two regular meetings on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month, unless posted otherwise. Regular meetings shall be held at 5:30 p.m. at the Education Center unless posted otherwise.

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 Internet web site. (Government Code 54954.2)

A notice of each regular meeting shall be mailed to any person who has filed with the Board a written request for such notice. The notice shall be mailed the week preceding, but not less than 72 hours prior to the meeting. Requests are valid for one year from the date filed unless renewed. Renewal requests must be filed within 90 days after January 1 of each year.

Whenever agenda materials related 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. (Government Code 54957.5)

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 place designated by the president or designee, who shall so inform, by the most rapid available means of communication, all news media who have requested notice of special meetings. (Government Code 54954)

Special Meetings

Special meetings of the Board may be called by the presiding officer or a majority of the Board members. Except as authorized by Government Code Section 54957.6, a special meeting shall not be called regarding the salary, salary schedule, or other compensation of the Superintendent, deputy superintendent, associate superintendent, assistant superintendent, or other executive employee as described in Government Code 3511.1. No action shall be taken at a special meeting regarding the salary, salary schedule, or other compensation of the Superintendent, deputy superintendent, associate superintendent, assistant superintendent, or other executive employee as described in Government Code 3511.1 (Government Code 54956).

Written notice of special meetings shall be delivered personally or by any other means to all Board members, the Superintendent, and the local media who have requested such notice in writing. The notice shall also be posted on the district's Internet 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 place of the meeting and the business to be transacted or discussed; no other business shall be considered at these meetings. (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 after the item's consideration. (Government Code 54954.3)

Public notice shall be given at least 72 hours' before any retreats, study sessions or training sessions held by the Board. All such meetings shall be held within district boundaries and action items shall not be included.

Emergency Meetings

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. 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)

2. A dire emergency, which shall be defined as a crippling disaster, mass destruction, terrorist activity, or threatened terrorist act that poses peril so immediate and significant that requiring the Board to provide one-hour notice before holding an emergency meeting under this section may endanger the public health and/or safety as determined by a majority of the member 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 notices of special meetings. 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 local media which have requested notice for special meetings, describing the purpose of the meeting and any action taken by the Board. (Government Code 54956.5)

In the case of a dire emergency, the Board President or designee shall give such notice at or near the time he/she notifies the other members of the Board about the meeting. (Government Code 54956.5)

No closed session may be held during an emergency meeting. All other rules governing special meetings shall be observed, with the exception of the 24-hour notice requirement. The minutes of the meeting, a list of persons the 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 ten days in a public place as soon after the meeting as possible. (Government Code 54956.5)

Adjourned Meetings

A majority vote by the Board may adjourn any meeting to a later time and place that shall be specified in the order of adjournment. (Government Code 54955)

If no members are present at any regular or adjourned regular meeting, the secretary or the clerk may declare the meeting adjourned to a later time and shall give notice in the same manner required for special meetings. (Government Code 54955)

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

Study Sessions, Retreats, Public Forums, and Discussion Meetings

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.

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

(cf. 2000 – Concepts and Roles in Administration)
(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.

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)

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)

All Board policies, administrative regulations and bylaws shall apply equally to meetings that are teleconferenced. The Superintendent or designee shall facilitate public participation in the meeting at each teleconference location.

Hearings

The Board may occasionally convene public hearings at which no Board action is to be taken. Such hearings are held solely to allow the Board and members of the public to receive information. A hearing may take place immediately prior to a Board meeting.

If a quorum of Board members is present at a hearing, notice of the hearing shall be provided according to procedures specified above for regular meetings.

Other Gatherings

Attendance by a majority of the Board members at any of the following events is not subject to state open meeting laws 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 Boards.
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 or at a legislative body of another local agency.
4. A purely social or ceremonial occasion.
5. 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 open meeting laws. (Government Code 54952.2)

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
- 35147 Open meeting law exceptions and applications

GOVERNMENT CODE

- 3511.1 Local agency executives
- 11135 State programs and activities, discrimination
- 54950-54963 The Ralph M. Brown Act, especially:
 - 54953 Meetings to be open and public; attendance
 - 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
 - 36.303 Auxiliary aids and services

COURT DECISIONS

Wolfe v. City of Fremont, (2006) 1444 Cal. App. 544

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:

CSBA PUBLICATIONS

The Brown Act: School Boards and Open Meeting Laws, rev. 2009

INSTITUTE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS

The ABCs of Open Government Laws

LEAGUE OF CALIFORNIA CITIES PUBLICATIONS

Open and Public IV : A Guide to the Ralph M. Brown Act, 2nd Ed., 2010

WEB SITES

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

California Attorney General's Office: <http://www.caag.state.ca.us>

Bylaw FRESNO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

adopted September 26, 1991 Fresno, California

revised: December 12, 2001

revised: February 13, 2003

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