
1400 Board Meetings

Each month, the Board will generally convene two meetings of the full Board.

The Board convenes (1) regular meetings; (2) special meetings, including Board committee meetings; (3) emergency meetings; (4) public hearings; and (5) closed sessions or executive sessions as necessary to fulfill Board responsibilities.

Except for the limited exceptions provided in this policy and state law, the Board will conduct its meetings in public.

1. Regular Meetings

The Board will hold regular meetings at least once a month, as required under state law, and according to a yearly schedule adopted per Board Policy No. 1220, Board Officers & Duties of Board Members.

Regular meetings are held at the John Stanford Center for Educational Excellence, 2445 3rd Avenue South, or at other places within the District and approved by the presiding officer or majority vote of the Board. State law provides that regular meetings held outside the John Stanford Center for Educational Excellence or adjourned to times other than a regular meeting time must be noticed in the same manner as special meetings.

Noticing and location requirements may be modified in the event of an emergency consistent with state law.

a. Regular Meeting Agendas

The Board charges the Superintendent, serving as the Secretary of the Board, or their designee, with preparing the proposed agenda for each regular meeting for finalization with the Board President per Board Policy No. 1220, Board Officers & Duties of Board Members.

To the extent possible, regular meeting agendas and accompanying materials should be available to Directors 10 days prior to meetings to allow for review. State law requires the agenda of business to be transacted to be posted on the District website not less than 24 hours in advance of the published start time of the meeting. Under this policy, the Board further requires that copies of the agenda, minutes of the previous regular meeting, and Board action reports be posted to the District's website at least three days in advance of the meeting.

The Board permits exceptions to the three-day posting requirement provided under this policy for new attachments and supplementary information (1) when the Board action report is posted at least three days in advance of the published start time of the meeting;

and (2) the Board Action Report and/or agenda item description notes that the Board action report has been updated.

Nothing in this section prohibits subsequent modifications to the agenda, nor invalidates any otherwise legal action taken at the meeting for which the agenda was not posted in accordance with this policy.

To expedite business at regular meetings, the Board approves the use of a consent agenda that typically includes meeting minutes, personnel and warrants reports, grant acceptances, contract approvals, capital projects approvals, items previously introduced and other items considered to be routine in nature as determined by the Board President and Superintendent during agenda setting. Any member of the Board may remove an item from the consent agenda to discuss and vote on the item individually. Remaining items are voted on with a single motion.

b. Public Testimony During Regular Meetings

State law requires an opportunity for public comment at or before regular meetings at which final action is taken. State law also requires an opportunity for written and oral comment before Board action on policies not expressly or by implication authorized under state or federal law.

The Board recognizes the value of public comment on educational issues and encourages speakers to address issues within the scope of the Board's responsibility.

The Board provides the following process for oral public testimony to be taken during regular meetings and delegates to the Superintendent or their designee administration of the process within these Board-adopted parameters and state law.

- **Testimony Signup Process**

- Generally, speakers must sign up for themselves. Exceptions are provided for students signed up by a parent or guardian and those needing an accommodation for the public testimony sign-up process.
- Testimony signups are taken in advance of each regular meeting agenda as stated on the agenda. Advance signups generally open at 8 a.m. on the Monday before the meeting and close at noon on the meeting day.
- Signups after noon on the meeting day are only accepted in person at the meeting. In-person signups close at the start of the testimony period.
- The first 25 individuals who sign up for public testimony are placed on the testimony list.
- Additional speakers are placed on a waiting list and may be called to provide testimony during the meeting if individuals on the testimony list are not available when called to provide testimony.

- **Rules for Public Testimony**

- Speakers are allowed a maximum of two minutes.
- Speakers may cede their time when they are called to testify. In this instance the total amount of time allowed shall not exceed two (2) minutes

for the combined number of speakers—time shall not be restarted after the new speaker begins.

- Each speaker is allowed only one speaking slot per meeting.
- The Board President may:
 - Call the speaker to order or terminate the speaker's statement once the allotted time has passed;
 - Interrupt a speaker to require the same standard of civility that the Board expects of itself. Examples of uncivil comments that will justify interruption of a speaker's remarks include those that:
 - Are defamatory;
 - Are an unwarranted invasion of privacy;
 - Are obscene or indecent;
 - Are "fighting words," i.e., words that are directed at an individual to incite an immediate and hostile reaction, such as through racial slurs;
 - Violate District policy or procedure related to harassment, intimidation, bullying, or discrimination;
 - Incite an unlawful act on District or school premises; or
 - Create a material and substantial disruption of the orderly operation of the Board meeting;
 - Request that the speaker leave the meeting if they refuse to come to order;
 - Request any individual to leave the meeting if they do not observe reasonable decorum;
 - Request the assistance of District security or law enforcement in the removal of a disorderly person who has previously been asked to leave and refused the request; and
 - Call for a recess or adjournment to another time or location when the lack of public decorum so interferes with the orderly conduct of the meeting as to warrant such action.
- The Board as a whole has the final decision in determining the appropriateness of all such rulings and can maintain order by removing those who are disruptive. However, the Board recognizes the distinction between uncivil discourse, which is not permitted, and comments that are negative but still civil in nature, and will exercise its authority to maintain order in a content-neutral manner.

- **Receipt of Oral Testimony by Board Directors**

- Directors should avoid responding to public testimony and avoid engaging in back-and-forth exchanges.
- Directors generally do not respond to questions or challenges made during the public comment period, and Directors' silence does not signal agreement, disagreement, or endorsement of the speaker's remarks.

The Open Public Meetings Act and this policy do not require testimony to be taken during emergency situations. Additionally, variance with the process described here does not invalidate Board actions otherwise taken consistent with state law. If these process requirements for public testimony are made infeasible due to other conditions, the Board will at a minimum satisfy the requirements of state law.

Written comments are accepted during Board meetings and through the School Board website.

2. Special Meetings

Special meetings, including Board committee meetings, may be called by the Board President or on a petition of a majority of the Board members.

The Board President or majority of the Board will only call and hold a special meeting when the following noticing requirements, which are delegated to the Superintendent or their designee and typically administered by the School Board Office, are met:

- A written notice of a special meeting, stating the time and place of the special meeting and the business to be transacted will be posted to the District's website not less than 24 hours in advance of the published start time of the meeting, and each Board member will receive notice of the posting by email and/or emailed calendar invitation. The written notice requirement is deemed waived as to a Board member if that Board member: (1) submits a written waiver of notice to the Board Secretary at or prior to the time the meeting convenes; or (2) is present at the time the meeting convenes.
- Written notice will also be sent not less than 24 hours in advance of the published start time of the meeting to each newspaper and radio or television station that has filed a written request for such notices with the School Board Office.
- Notice of the special meeting will be prominently displayed at the main entrance of the John Stanford Center for Educational Excellence and the location of the meeting, if different, not less than 24 hours in advance of the published start time of the meeting. During a declared emergency which prevents a meeting from being held in-person with reasonable safety the District may instead post notice of a remote meeting without a physical location on the District's website not less than 24 hours in advance of the published start time of the meeting.
- The notices provided in this section may be dispensed with in the event a special meeting is called to deal with an emergency involving injury or damage to persons or property or the likelihood of such injury or damage, when time requirements of such notice would make notice impractical and increase the likelihood of such injury or damage, or when the required notice cannot be posted or displayed with reasonable safety, including but not limited to declared emergencies in which travel to physically post notice is barred or is inadvisable.

The Board will not take final disposition on any matter not contained on the special meeting agenda.

3. Emergency Meetings

State law provides that if, by reason of fire, flood, earthquake, or other emergency, there is a need for expedited action by the Board to meet the emergency, the Board President may provide for a meeting site other than the regular meeting site, for a remote meeting without a physical location, or for a meeting at which the physical attendance by some or all members of the public is limited due to a declared emergency, and notice requirements shall be suspended during such emergency.

4. Public Hearings

For topics of special public interest and/or as required by law, the Board may schedule public hearings to receive public testimony outside of the general regular meeting testimony process. The Board President shall designate a time limit for public testimony which shall not exceed three minutes per person.

Speakers may be required to provide their full name, address, and relationship to Seattle Public Schools as part of the sign-up process and to designate whether they are testifying for or against the agenda item. The Board will also accept written testimony.

5. Executive Sessions and Closed Sessions

The Board may hold executive or closed sessions for the purpose of discussing confidential matters as provided for in the Open Public Meetings Act or as otherwise authorized by law.

Directors have a duty to keep information from these sessions confidential. Disclosure of confidential information from an executive session is prohibited by the Code of Ethics for Municipal Officers (RCW 42.23.070(4)). Board Policy No. 5251, Ethics, also prohibits the use of confidential information for private gain.

a. Executive Sessions

Before convening in executive session, the Board President or other presiding officer shall publicly announce the general purpose for excluding the public from the meeting place and the time when the executive session will be concluded. The executive session may be extended to a stated later time by announcement of the Board President or other presiding officer. The announced purpose of excluding the public must be entered into the minutes of the meeting.

Common executive session topics include:

- Performance of a public employee;
- Complaints against a public employee;
- Litigation or potential litigation; and
- Real estate transactions.

The Board will take final action resulting from executive session discussions during a meeting open to the public as required by law.

b. Closed Sessions

Closed sessions are not subject to the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act or other provisions of this policy, including quorum requirements, and do not require public notice. Closed session topics include:

- Quasi-judicial proceedings (hearings); and
- Discussions regarding labor negotiations.

6. General Meeting Requirements

a. Meeting Conduct

The Board will conduct Board meetings in an orderly and business-like manner using Roberts Rules of Order (Revised) as a guide, except when superseded by Board policies.

b. Order of Business

The Board will use the agenda to establish its regular order of business. However, either the Superintendent or a Board member may request additions or changes to the posted agenda, and the Board may adopt a revised agenda or order of business by a majority vote of the Board members present. At a special meeting, the Board may take final action only on that business contained in the notice of the special meeting and agenda. Nothing in this section shall prevent the presiding officer from adjusting the ordering of agenda items, as needed, to promote the efficient use of meeting time.

c. Quorum

Four Board members constitutes a quorum for the transaction of business. Two Board members constitutes a quorum for the transaction of business at a committee meeting. Board members are not required to be physically present to participate in a Board or committee meeting and count toward the quorum requirements. Any or all Board members may attend and vote via a communication platform – including teleconference – that provides, at a minimum, real-time verbal communication without being in the same physical location as those in attendance.

d. Voting

The Board will vote by oral roll call vote except when voting on the Consent Agenda, for which the Board will use a “voice” vote. The Board will not take action by secret ballot at any meeting required to be open to the public. Except as provided in the next paragraph, a majority vote shall determine the outcome of a motion. In that regard, if a Board member abstains, the Board member’s presence counts toward meeting the quorum requirement but does not count as a vote for or against the motion. The outcome of the vote is determined by the majority of those who voted.

A majority vote of all the members of the Board is required for any person to be elected or selected as a Board officer, filling a vacancy on the Board, or for the selection of the District Superintendent.

e. Communication During Meetings

State law requires that the business of the Board be conducted in public. Therefore, during Board meetings, Board members should exercise principles of good governance and refrain from communicating electronically (e.g., by email, text, or social media) with their fellow Board members regarding Board business (i.e., any matter that may come before the Board for action).

f. Meeting Accessibility

The District will provide a process to request language interpretation and auxiliary aids or services for School Board meetings.

g. Weapons Prohibited

Board Policy No. 4210, Firearms and Other Dangerous Weapons Prohibited, and state law provide general prohibitions on students and members of the public carrying or possessing weapons at school or District facilities and events. Additionally, it is unlawful for any member of the public to knowingly carry onto, or to possess on, any area of a facility being used for official school board meetings, a dangerous weapon, including but not limited to a firearm, "nun-chu-ka sticks," "throwing stars," air gun or pistol, stun gun, or other dangerous weapon as listed in RCW 9.41.280. Signs providing notice of the restrictions on possession of firearms and other weapons will be posted at facilities being used for official meetings of the Board.

h. Meeting Recordings

Regular and special meetings of the Board at which a final action is taken or formal public testimony is accepted (except executive sessions or emergency meetings) are audio recorded by District staff as required by state law with recordings maintained for at least one year. The recording must include the comments of the Directors and the comments of members of the public if formal public testimony is accepted at the meeting. However, state law provides that it is not a violation of state law if, despite good faith attempts, technological issues prevent a recording from being made or render any or all of a recording unintelligible.

i. Meeting Minutes

Generally, the Superintendent designates staff to develop draft meeting minutes for regular and special meetings. However, the Board President or other presiding officer is charged by the Board with recording legally required information for executive sessions when staff are not present to do so.

Draft minutes are submitted to the Board or relevant committee for approval. Approved minutes are posted to the District website for public inspection and become a permanent record of the District as required by state law.

Minutes of the Board are not transcripts or summaries of discussion as that information is captured in meeting audio recordings. Minutes capture the official actions of the Board taken during a meeting. Approved minutes of the Board should include:

- The date, time, and place of the meeting;
- The presiding officer;
- Members in attendance;
- The agenda items reviewed during the meeting and the results of voting;
- Action to recess for executive session with a general statement of the purpose;
- Time of adjournment; and
- The date minutes were approved.

Superintendent Procedure:**Policy Cross References:**

- 1210 – Election of Officers
- 1220 – Board Officers and Duties of Board Members
- 1240 – Committees
- 1450 – Absence of a Board Member
- 1610 – Conflicts of Interest
- 1620 – Board-Superintendent Relationship
- 1620BP – Board-Superintendent Relationship Procedure
- 4210 – Firearms and Other Dangerous Weapons Prohibited
- 4040 – Public Access to District Records
- 5251 – Ethics

Previous Policies:

- 1410 – Executive or Closed Sessions
- 1420 – Proposed Agendas and Consent Agenda
- 1430 – Audience Participation
- 1430BP – Audience Participation
- 1440 – Minutes
- B40.00 – Meetings
- B41.00 – Executive Sessions
- B42.00 – Agenda
- B43.00 – Quorum
- B44.00 – Meeting Conduct and Order of Business
- B45.00 – Motions and Resolutions

Legal References:

- RCW 9.41.280 Possessing dangerous weapons on school facilities — Penalty — Exceptions.
- RCW 28A.320.040 Directors—Bylaws for board and school government.
- RCW 28A.330.020 Certain Board elections, manner and vote required.
- RCW 28A.330.070 Office of Board—Records available for public inspection.
- RCW 28A.343.370 Directors—Vacancies.

- RCW 28A.343.380 Directors—Meetings.
- RCW 28A.343.390 Directors—Quorum—Failure to attend meetings.
- RCW 42.23.070 Prohibited acts.
- Chapter 42.30 RCW Open Public Meetings Act.
- RCW 42.30.030 Meetings declared open and public.
- RCW 42.30.050 Interruptions – Procedure.
- RCW 42.30.060 Open Public Meetings—Voting by secret ballot prohibited.
- RCW 42.30.070 Time and places for meetings – Emergencies-Exception.
- RCW 42.30.077 Agendas of Regular Meetings – Online Availability.
- RCW 42.30.080 Special Meetings.
- 42 U.S.C. §§12101-12213 Americans with Disabilities Act.
- AGO 2017 No. 5 - Aug 3 2017, Whether Information Learned in an Executive Session is Confidential.

Management Resources:

- *WSSDA Policy & Legal News*, June 2022
- *WSSDA Policy & Legal News*, June 2014
- *WSSDA Policy & Legal News*, April 2013
- *WSSDA Policy & Legal News*, December 2012
- *WSSDA Policy & Legal News*, June 2012
- *OPMA – Executive Sessions Checklist for Local Governments*, Municipal Research Services Council (MRSC)

Last Board Review:

- July 2, 2025

Revisions:

- July 2, 2025
- June 7, 2023
- December 14, 2022
- October 26, 2022
- July 1, 2015
- April 2015
- October 1, 2014
- September 18, 2013
- November 28, 2012

Adopted by the Board:

- June 1, 2011