

# Board Policy B-2: School Board Meetings



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## REFERENCES

[B-2: Administrative Procedures, School Board Meetings](#)  
[Board of Education Handbook](#)  
[Utah Code Ann. §11-14-318, Public Hearing Required](#)  
[Utah Code Ann. §52-4-101 et seq., Open and Public Meetings Act](#)  
[Utah Code Ann. §53G-4-203, 204, 402\(21\), Local School Boards](#)  
[Utah Code Ann. §53G-7-208, Local Governmental Entities and School Districts](#)  
[Utah Code Ann. §53F-8-201\(3\), Annual Certification of Tax Rate Proposed by Local School Board](#)  
[Utah Code Ann. §53G-7-303\(2\), Local School Board Budget Procedures](#)  
[Utah Code Ann. §53G-7-305, Limits on Appropriations](#)  
[Utah Code Ann. §63F-1-701, Utah Public Notice Website](#)  
*Robert's Rules in Plain English: A Readable, Authoritative, Easy-to-Use Guide to Running Meetings (2nd Edition)*, by Doris P. Zimmerman (Collins Reference, 2005)

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## THE POLICY

The Salt Lake City School District Board of Education meets regularly so that the board may discuss or act upon matters over which it has jurisdiction. All board meetings must be open to the public unless they are closed in accordance with Utah law.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure compliance with all relevant sections of Utah law, including requirements of the Utah Open and Public Meetings Act, and to provide appropriate opportunities for public comment at board meetings.

**Public Hearings:** A public hearing is an open meeting at which members of the public are given a reasonable opportunity to comment on the subject of the meeting. A public hearing may differ from the regular public comment period in both its expected focus and potential duration. In general, the board, through its elected leadership, may determine whether a board meeting will include a public hearing. However, the board must hold a public hearing when considering any of the following: (a) whether to close a school or change school boundaries; (b) the adoption of a district budget; (c) an increase in taxation; or (d) changes to the board member compensation schedule.

**Closed Meetings:** In accordance with state law, the board may hold closed meetings upon a two-thirds affirmative vote of the board members present at a meeting for which public notice was given. The board may not approve any resolution, rule, regulation, contract, or appointment at a closed meeting, nor may the board interview an applicant to fill a vacant position on the board. Board members may participate in closed meetings through electronic means; however, when participating electronically, board members must use caution to ensure that the confidential nature of closed session discussions is maintained.

**Electronic Meetings:** The board may hold an electronic board meeting if board leadership determines it is necessary and the requirements of Utah law are met. An electronic board meeting may also be held in order to comply with any applicable health and safety orders, or in circumstances in which meeting physically would pose a threat to the health and safety of board members or the community. Remote access and participation by phone, of board members at a regularly scheduled public board meeting does not constitute an electronic meeting.

**Emergency Meetings:** If a board meeting must be called to address an emergency or urgent public necessity, and the required twenty-four (24) hour notice is not feasible, the best practical notice must be given, including time, place, and topics to be considered at the meeting. An emergency meeting may not be held unless an attempt has been made to notify all board members and the majority of members approve the meeting.

**Location of Meetings:** Regularly scheduled meetings must be held at the location specified in the board's annual notice of meetings, unless a change of location has been specified in the public notice for an individual meeting.

Workshops, study sessions, and executive sessions held on the same day as a regularly scheduled open public meeting of the board must be held at the same location as that regular meeting, except as deemed necessary and permitted under Utah law.

**Notice and Agenda Requirements:** At least once each year, the board must give public notice of its annual meeting schedule, in accordance with Utah law, including the anticipated date, time, and place of each meeting. In addition, the board must give public notice of every individual meeting, at least 24 hours in advance, including the agenda, date, time, and place of the meeting.

The board directs that notice of meetings, including agendas, be posted on the district's website, sent to the office of the mayor of Salt Lake City, and posted on the Utah Public Notice website.

Agendas must be reasonably specific in describing the topics scheduled for discussion. In general, the board will follow its posted agenda. If a topic not on the agenda arises during a public meeting, the board may, at the discretion of its presiding officer, discuss the topic but may not take any final action on it during that meeting.

**Agenda Development:** The board president, board vice president, and superintendent should develop board meeting agendas collaboratively. Any board member may request that a topic be placed on an upcoming meeting agenda by contacting the board president or vice president. In general, scheduling of topics is at the discretion of board leadership, but if two or more board members submit a request that a topic be placed on the agenda, that request will be accommodated within two meetings.

**Consent Agenda:** Any request by a board member to move a topic off of the consent agenda and onto the action agenda must be received by the superintendent and board president at least twenty-four (24) hours prior to the scheduled board meeting, and must include an explanation of the board member's concerns with the consent item(s). Advance notice of the specific concern(s) will allow the superintendent, or superintendent's designee, to be prepared to fully discuss those concerns at the board meeting.

**Quorum Required for Action:** A majority of the board, or four members, constitutes a quorum of the board. The presence of a quorum is required before the board may take any vote or action. A quorum is not required at informational meetings, study sessions, or executive sessions at which no action is taken.

**Public Comment at Board Meetings and Communication with Board Members:** The board recognizes that public comments and suggestions are vital to its decision-making process. The board welcomes public participation and will normally include a public comment period on the agenda of at least one board meeting every month. The administrative procedures associated with this policy contain additional information governing public comment at board meetings.

Citizens may contact members of the board to express views or urge action via e-mail, regular mail, and/or telephone at the addresses and numbers listed on the district website. Messages may also be sent by e-mail or letter to the office of the superintendent, where they will be copied and distributed to all board members.

The public comment notice, which will be published on the applicable board meeting agenda, will be approved by the board.

**Local Governmental Involvement:** The mayor of Salt Lake City, or mayor's designee, may attend and participate in board discussions at board meetings.

**Recording and Minutes of Open Board Meetings:** Both written minutes and a recording must be kept of every open board meeting, except site visits or traveling tours where no vote or action is taken by the board. At such site meetings or traveling tours, either a recording or written minutes must be kept. The board considers its written minutes, once they have been approved by vote of the board, to be the official record of actions taken.

The recording and minutes of an open meeting at which a vote is taken to hold a closed meeting must contain the reason or reasons for holding a closed meeting and the votes, by name, of members present, either for or against the motion to hold such a meeting. The location of the closed meeting must also be recorded.

An audio recording will be made of all open board meetings and will be available for one year on the district website (<http://www.slcschools.org>). Video recordings of electronic meetings may also be available for review depending on the technology and conferencing platform used to host the meeting.

Any board member may request that information be attached to the minutes, as long as such information is a record of the proceedings of the meeting.

**Recording of Closed Board Meetings:** A recording must be kept of all closed board meetings, except when the meeting is closed exclusively to discuss concerns of an individual's character, professional competence, physical, or mental health, or the deployment of security personnel, devices, or systems.

**Recording of Board Meetings by Members of the Public:** Any person in attendance may record all or part of the proceedings in any open board meeting, provided such recording does not interfere with the conduct of the meeting.

**Procedural Guidelines and Parliamentary Motions:** Meetings of the board should be guided by a less formal version of Robert's Rules of Order appropriate for smaller boards and assemblies. The superintendent, in consultation with the board, shall appoint an individual to serve as the board's parliamentarian. The Board of Education Handbook and *Robert's Rules in Plain English* by Doris Zimmerman shall be used as references in conducting board meetings.

- A. The board has an established agenda format for its board meetings and annual planning session.
- B. Action items on the agenda require:
  - 1. a motion by a board member;
  - 2. a second to the motion;
  - 3. a discussion of the motion by board members; and
  - 4. a vote by board members.
- C. Other than the consent agenda, each motion should be limited to one idea or issue.
- D. No new motion may be made while another is being discussed.
- E. A motion may be amended and votes on the amendments must be taken before acting on the original motion.
- F. Before a vote on a main motion is taken, business can be interrupted by a motion:
  - 1. to table the main motion;
  - 2. to postpone action;
  - 3. to refer the motion to a committee;
  - 4. to withdraw it from consideration; or
  - 5. to adjourn the meeting.The subsidiary motions must be disposed of prior to action on the main motion.
- G. The time allotted for discussing a motion or report may be limited by the president.
- H. Debate can be closed formally with a motion to move the question and a two-thirds affirmative vote.
- I. When the president senses the discussion has ended, a vote may be taken without a formal motion to close debate unless a member objects.
- J. Some motions are not debatable, such as a motion to adjourn or to appeal a decision to the chair. See, *Jurassic Parliament Motions Chart and Cheat Sheet*, Appendix I and II in the Board of Education Handbook.
- K. A board member, but no one else, may question a board procedure by rising to a point of order at any time. After the point is stated, the president issues a ruling that may be appealed to a vote of the full board. Five votes are required to overrule the president or suspend a rule.
- L. Before a motion is voted upon, it should be read aloud.
- M. The president, by virtue of membership on the board, is expected to vote on each issue before the board.
- N. Given the seven member composition of this board, a two-thirds affirmative vote will be achieved as follows:
  - 1. If seven board members are present, five members' votes are needed;
  - 2. If six board members are present, four members' votes are needed;
  - 3. If five board members are present, three members' votes are needed; and
  - 4. If four board members are present, three members' votes are needed.
- O. The president should keep readily at hand a reference guide, such as the chart of parliamentary motions, and may implement other parliamentary procedures in order to expedite the business of the board.
- P. The president may call a board member to order for disruptive conduct or conduct in violation of the board's Statement of Ethics.

**Documents or Information for Discussion in a Board Meeting:** The board relies on clear, high-quality information from the superintendent, business administrator, district staff, and others in the community. All presenters at board meetings should read, consider, and follow the administrative procedures associated with this policy. Any member of the board may send a document or article of general interest to all board members or forward it to the superintendent for distribution. If a board member, the superintendent, or the business administrator wants to discuss any document(s) related to an item on the board's consent, discussion, or action agenda, he or she must provide copies for all members of the board, and for the superintendent at least twenty-four hours in advance of the scheduled board meeting in order to allow sufficient time for the document(s) to be read and considered. Nothing in this section prevents information related to an item on the board's agenda from being presented during a meeting, and having that information included in the public record of that meeting. Questions about documents or other information provided as part of board meeting agendas, or in the superintendent's memoranda, may be directed to the superintendent or to individual presenters as specified, or addressed in small group meetings set up for this purpose.

**Annual Training:** The board president must ensure that members of the board are provided annual training on provisions of Utah's Open and Public Meetings Act and this policy.

The board will set forth its specific processes for implementing this board policy through the accompanying [administrative procedures](#).