

Lower Merion School District

Policy No.: 007
Section: LOCAL BOARD PROCEDURES
Title: BOARD MEETINGS
Date Adopted: 3/26/07 (Replaces Article I of the By-Laws)
Date Last Revised: 3/18/24; 1/22/24; 11/20/23; 9/11/23; 1/25/2021;
1/11/19; 6/11/18; 11/20/17; 1/27/14

007 BOARD MEETINGS

A. Regular and special public legislative meetings

1. Definitions

- a. Legislative Meetings of the Board - Meetings of the Board held in public where official action is taken to conduct District business. For official action to be taken, a quorum is needed. Legislative meetings are sometimes referred to as “business meetings.”
- b. Regular Legislative Meetings - Monthly scheduled meetings of the Board where action is taken to conduct District business. Per the Pennsylvania School Code, the Board must conduct a legislative meeting at least once every other month.
- c. Special Legislative Meetings - Meetings called in addition to regular legislative meetings to conduct time-sensitive business. The President may call a special legislative meeting at any time and shall call a special legislative meeting upon presentation of the written requests of three (3) school directors. Upon the President's failure or refusal to call a special legislative meeting, such a meeting may be called at any time by a majority of the Board members.

2. Dates of Regular Legislative Meetings

Regular public legislative meetings of the Board of School Directors (herein “Board”) shall be public and shall normally be held on the third Monday of each month at a time and location designated in the accompanying Local Board Procedure.

3. Agendas

It shall be the responsibility of the Superintendent, after consultation with the Board President, to prepare an agenda of the items of business to come before the Board at each regular meeting.

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B. Quorum

1. Number of Board members

A quorum shall be five or more school directors present at a regular or special public legislative meeting. No business shall be transacted at a meeting without a quorum, but the directors at such a meeting may vote to adjourn to a specific date and time.

2. Participation by Remote Communication Device

Members of the Board of School Directors may participate in a Board meeting governed by the Sunshine Act and vote by means of remote communication device (such as speaker telephone or videoconferencing) in the event of an emergency meeting or in the event of an unavoidable conflict by a Board member.

“Emergency meeting” is defined as a time sensitive situation or matter pressing enough that waiting to vote until a regularly scheduled meeting could or would substantially change the outcome of the issue under consideration.

“Unavoidable conflict” means (1) the Board member could not have reasonably anticipated the scheduling of the meeting at which the Board member desires to participate at the time the Board member made arrangements to be somewhere that prevents the attendance of the Board member at that Board meeting or (2) the Board member is experiencing an urgent and significant personal or professional concern that prevents their attendance at a Board meeting at which the Board member desires to participate.

Absent an emergency meeting or unavoidable conflict, a board member must be physically present at any meeting to participate and vote. Board members may only participate by remote communication device as the result of unavoidable conflicts three (3) times within a twelve-month span. The Board may, by majority vote of members physically present at the meeting for which the Board member is unavoidably absent, waive this three (3) times limit.

It is the board member's responsibility when desiring to participate by remote communication device to immediately notify the President of the Board that he or she will be unable to attend the meeting, but will be able to participate by remote communication device. In such a case, arrangements must be made at the location of the board meeting for a remote communication device of the Board's choosing which can be heard by all board members and by the public in attendance at the meeting at the same volume as if the member on remote communication device were physically at the meeting. The board member participating by remote communication device must be able to hear all comments from the other board members and from the public in attendance. No more than two board

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members may participate by remote communication device at a given meeting. Preference will be given to the first Board member who requests remote communication device participation. The presence of a board member via remote communication device will be counted toward the quorum necessary to hold a meeting.

C. Parliamentary Order

The Pennsylvania School Board Association’s *Essentials of Parliamentary Procedure* shall be a guide for Board meetings except as otherwise provided by law.

D. Use of Recording Devices

The Board recognizes the usefulness of recording and broadcasting the proceedings during regular and special public legislative meetings and, from time-to-time, other public meetings of the Board and its committees. Therefore, the Board, at its sole discretion, may video record or broadcast in real time all or any portion of public legislative meetings or, at the Board’s sole discretion, other public meetings of the Board or committees of the Board, subject to limitations set forth in the accompanying Administrative Regulation.

Members of the public, which also includes any member of the news media, may use certain recording devices to record public meeting proceedings, as set forth in the accompanying Administrative Regulation.

E. Hearing of Members of the Public

A member of the public present at a Board meeting may address the Board in accordance with law and Board policy and procedures. The public comment periods are reserved for District residents and property taxpayers to the District. Community input is limited to three (3) minutes per individual speaker per Audience Recognition unless extended (1) by the Board President at a particular meeting or (2) by the majority of the Board upon motion by a Board member. Time may not be yielded or otherwise transferred by one speaker to another for purposes of extending the second speaker’s time allotment. The Board may provide for additional opportunities for public comment at its discretion or as required by law.

In order to permit the Board to complete the voting portion of its meeting in a timely and orderly manner, the total time limit for the Audience Recognition for Agenda Items is forty-five (45) minutes, unless extended by the Board for special circumstances. Individuals will be given priority to speak in the order in which they sign up with the Board Secretary prior to the Audience Recognition.

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F. Committee Meetings

Committee meetings may be called at any time by the committee chairperson, with proper public notice, or when requested to do so.

A majority of the total membership of a committee shall constitute a quorum.

Unless held as an executive session, committee meetings shall be open to the public, other Board members, and the Superintendent. Community input is limited to three (3) minutes per individual speaker per Audience Recognition unless extended (1) by the Board Committee Chairperson at a particular meeting or (2) by the majority of the Board members in attendance upon motion by a Board Committee member. Time may not be yielded or otherwise transferred by one speaker to another for purposes of extending the second speaker’s time allotment. The Board Committee may provide for additional opportunities for public comment at its discretion or as required by law.

In order to permit the Board Committee to complete the voting portion of its meeting in a timely and orderly manner, the total time limit for the Audience Recognition for Agenda Items is forty-five (45) minutes, unless extended by the Board for special circumstances. Individuals will be given priority to speak in the order in which they sign up with the Board Committee Chairperson, or designee, prior to the Audience Recognition.

A majority of the committee or the chairperson may invite District employees, consultants or other persons who have special knowledge of the area under investigation.

G. Information Sessions

These sessions are solely for the purpose of gathering information and clarifying issues. They may involve Board attendance at a meeting arranged by an outside group or inviting someone in to provide information to the Board. No deliberations may take place at such a meeting. An information session is not required to be open to the public.

H. Distribution of Materials

- i. Meetings shall be devoted exclusively for the purposes, procedures and efforts conceived, conducted and directed by the Board or its designees toward the goal of the education of students and the purpose for which the meeting was called.
- ii. All materials that are to be handed out to the public at Board meetings shall be items identified by the Board or Superintendent as relevant to agenda items and shall be limited

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entirely to information about the school system or a District-sponsored program or school activity.

Cross reference:

Policy and Administrative Regulation No. 800, *Records Management*
65 Pa. C.S. §§ 701-716 (Pennsylvania Sunshine Act)