



Lansville

Central School District

Board of Education:

Public Session of
Regular Board
Meetings



Mustang Mysteries

What types of meetings are held by Boards?

▶ Annual Reorganizational Meeting

- ▶ Elects and appoints district officers and assigns organizational responsibilities
- ▶ New Board members take Oath of Office
- ▶ New President and VP (optional) are elected
- ▶ Sets meeting dates of the Board for the year

▶ Regular Board of Education Meetings

- ▶ Regularly scheduled business meetings held throughout the year

▶ Special Board of Education Meetings

- ▶ May be called to address a particular need for Board discussion or action that are scheduled in addition to regular Board meetings



What are requirements for holding a Board meeting?

▶ Quorum

- ▶ A simple majority (more than half) of the total number of Board members
- ▶ Required to conduct any official business or take official action

▶ Public Notice

- ▶ If scheduled at least one week in advance, must give public notice to include time and place in newspaper (Hornell Tribune & Livingston County News) AND in another public location (District Website)
- ▶ If scheduled less than a week in advance, public notice “to the extent practicable” and posted publicly (District Website & Facebook pages) at a “reasonable time before the meeting”
- ▶ Agenda and public materials posted 24-hours prior to the meeting



What are components of Public Session?

- ▶ **A Board of Education regular meeting agenda typically includes the following components:**
 - ▶ **Header:** The agenda header includes the meeting's name, date, time, and location.
 - ▶ **Call to order:** The board chair announces the meeting is called to order and states the time.
 - ▶ **Roll call (attendance):** Notes Board members present or absent.
 - ▶ **Executive Session(s):** If needed or anticipated.
 - ▶ **Consent agenda:** This agenda item consolidates voting on the minutes of the last meeting and committee reports.
 - ▶ **Reports:** The executive director and officers give reports.
 - ▶ **Committee reports:** Committee chairs give brief reports on their committee's work.
 - ▶ **Approval of Minutes:** Approve minutes of prior meetings and review if necessary.
 - ▶ **Old business:** This is a discussion of items that need further discussion, require a vote, or were not resolved at the last meeting.
 - ▶ **New business:** New business for the current meeting.
 - ▶ **Public comment:** A section for residents or staff of the district to provide comments.
 - ▶ **Personnel Actions:** Specifics may be discuss in executive session, names not required in public session.
 - ▶ **Post-meeting action items:** A space to list tasks or follow-up actions that need to be completed after the meeting.
 - ▶ **Adjournment:** Must occur in public session through motion and vote

The image shows a sample agenda document for a Board of Education meeting. The agenda is structured as follows:

- 6:00pm Executive Session
 - Personnel Related and/or Contractual Matters
- 6:30pm Call to Order
 - Motion to Move to Regular Session
 - Roll Call
 - Pledge of Allegiance
- Agenda Changes
 - Board may add or remove or otherwise amend the agenda.
- Visitors' Comments
 - Guidelines for Visitors' Comments
- Reports
 - Board Members
 - Committee Reports (if necessary)
 - Superintendent
 - Public Presentations
 - Building Reports (Presentations at the 2nd Board Mtg)
- Approval of Minutes
 - Minutes from September 24, 2024
- Business
 - Resolution to Grant Permission to Sign Contracts and Change Orders for 2022 CIP
 - Memorandum of Agreement with Dansville Teachers' Association (Volleyball)
 - Resolution for Cooperative Bids for the 2025-26 SY
 - Memorandum of Agreement with Dansville Administrators' Association (Salary Adjustment)
 - Resolution to Accept Donation - DHS Class of 2003
 - Resolution to Dispose of School Materials
 - Agreement between Dansville CSD and The Rochester School of the Holy Childhood: 2024-25 SY
 - Memorandum of Agreement with Dansville Teachers' Association (AIS 3-6)



What is an Agenda Setting Meeting?

- ▶ The Superintendent and Board President are responsible for setting the agenda.
- ▶ In some districts, the vice president also participates in the Agenda Setting meeting. This enables them to be prepared for the board meeting, as well as review regular and new business topics to be covered.
- ▶ Occurs before each meeting with enough time to publicly publish prior to the meeting.
- ▶ After the agenda is set, items may be added at the discretion of the Superintendent and Board President.



What are Robert's Rules of Order?

- ▶ **Robert's Rules of Order** is a guide for running effective school board meetings that helps ensure the rights of participation for all members:
 - ▶ **Order of business** - The agenda should prioritize minutes, reports, time-sensitive items, unfinished business, general items, and new business.
 - ▶ **Speaking** - Only one person can speak at a time, after being recognized by the chair.
 - ▶ **Debate/Discussion** - Only one issue can be discussed at a time, and all board members have equal rights to speak.
 - ▶ **Voting** - a majority vote usually decides a question, unless basic rights are involved.
 - ▶ **Motions** - A member proposes a motion by saying "I move to...", and another member seconds the motion by saying "I second the motion".
 - ▶ **Agenda approval of changes** - the agenda is initially approved by the chair (agenda setting), but the majority of the assembly must vote to adopt any changes at the beginning of the meeting.
 - ▶ **Quorum** - A quorum must be present for business to be conducted.
 - ▶ **Silence gives consent.**



Roles of Superintendent, President & Board Members in Public Session

▶ Board President

- ▶ Introduces items on the agenda
- ▶ Asks for and monitors discussion in public session
- ▶ Asks for motion to enter and exit executive session
- ▶ Facilitates & moderates conversation and participates with all members

▶ Board Members & Student Board Member

- ▶ Actively participate in discussion
- ▶ Can motion to enter executive session (except student member)
- ▶ Votes on resolutions (except student member)
- ▶ May facilitate conversation and participates with all members

▶ Superintendent

- ▶ Provides information, background, and details regarding public session content for Board's knowledge and consideration
- ▶ Cannot vote, but advises the Board on options, recommends courses of action



Public Comment

- ▶ **True or false?** By state law, school boards must allow the public to speak at a designated portion of their meetings reserved for this purpose.
- ▶ **False:** Although most school boards routinely include a public comment opportunity in their agendas, there is no legal obligation.
 - ▶ School board meetings are meetings of the board of education that are required to take place in public; however, they are not actually meetings of the public. Rather, they are business meetings held to conduct board business.
 - ▶ Each school board has the prerogative to set the rules for how their meetings will take place, including any public participation portion.
 - ▶ The agenda for a given meeting should clearly indicate when public participation is permissible.



Public Comment

- ▶ **The Board can establish rules that can avoid common issues involving public participation.**
 - ▶ The Board can limit the amount of time each person or representative of a group can speak (usually two to three minutes).
 - ▶ The Board can specify that people who wish to speak sign a register before the public comment session with their name and contact information, and that they must be recognized by the chair before being allowed to speak.
- ▶ **The Board may also explain what is and is not allowable to comment on during public participation sections for legal or other reasons.**
 - ▶ The board should not permit public comments related to personnel issues
- ▶ **The Board does not have to answer questions posed during public comment.**
 - ▶ In fact, the Board will generally not answer questions to avoid providing misinformation or impulsive reacting, but instead have the Superintendent reply after the meeting.



Public Comment

Guidelines for Visitors' Comments:

“The Dansville Board of Education believes that open communication with our families, students, teachers, staff, and district residents is very important.

For this reason, we set aside time during each regular Board meeting for public comments.

Any individual who wishes to submit public comments for Board consideration should contact the District Clerk at least 24-hours prior to a regularly scheduled Board meeting by calling (585) 335-4000 x2300.

In order to focus on tonight's previously scheduled agenda, as a general rule, the Board will not respond to your comments and questions at this time. We may refer your comments and questions to the administration for follow-up, or we may add the subject of your comments to the agenda of a future meeting. Either way, please be assured that we welcome and take your comments very seriously.

The Board asks each person to limit comments to not more than three minutes. Thank you.”



Mysteries Solved?

- ▶ “They don’t discuss with the public, so they must not care about what we have to say.”
 - ▶ Board meetings are meeting that are required to be held IN public (Open Meetings Law)
 - ▶ Board meetings are not the same as Public Hearings
- ▶ “Why are they having a special meeting? They must be trying to push something through quickly.”
 - ▶ Special board meetings may be called to address a particular need for Board that arises outside of regularly scheduled meetings
 - ▶ May be time sensitive
 - ▶ Public is still notified



Mustang Mysteries



References

- ▶ [New York State School Boards Association \(NYSSBA\) Public Participation at Board Meetings](#)
- ▶ [NYSSBA New School Board Member Handbook](#)
- ▶ [School Law 39th Edition](#)
- ▶ [Robert's Rules of Order](#)





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