



## **School Board Basics**

School board meetings are typically held on the third Thursday of each month at 6:00 in the Robert D. Little board room at the Central Office located at 1 Aviation Center Drive, Rantoul, IL 61866. Although board meetings may be adjusted you can always find an agenda and meeting dates/times on our website <https://www.rcs137.org/board-of-education>.

At each regular and special open meeting, during Public Comments, members of the public and District employees may comment to or ask questions of the School Board, subject to reasonable constraints.

*Members of the public may speak during the Public Comment portion of the meeting. Comments are limited to five minutes. Board members will not respond to public comments during Public Comment. Should total Public Comments approach or exceed a cumulative time of 30 minutes, the Board may suspend additional Public Comments until immediately prior to the Board and Superintendent Comments portion of the agenda.*

The individuals appearing before the board for Public Comment are expected to follow these guidelines:

- Address the board only at the appropriate time as indicated on the agenda and when recognized by the Board President.
- Identify oneself and be brief. Ordinarily, comments shall be limited to 5 minutes. In unusual circumstances, and when an individual has made a request in advance to speak for a longer period of time, the individual may be allowed to speak for more than 5 minutes.
- Observe the Board President's decision to shorten public comment to conserve time and give the maximum number of individuals an opportunity to speak.
- Observe the Board President's decision to determine procedural matters regarding public participation not otherwise covered in board policy.
- Conduct oneself with respect and civility toward others and otherwise abide by Board Policy, 8:30, Visitors to and Conduct on School Property.
- Petitions or written correspondence to the board shall be presented to the board in the next regular board packet.

Any and all members of the public present for the Board Meeting are expected to conduct themselves with respect and civility toward others and otherwise abide by Board Policy, 8:30, Visitors to and Conduct on School Property. Members of the public who disrupt the meeting may be removed from the meeting at the discretion of the board.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

**Who serves on the school board?** The school board consists of lay representatives – people who live in the community and are selected by the community. They are your neighbors: parents, grandparents, local business owners, retirees – ordinary citizens. They are non-partisan and they receive no pay or benefits for their public service.

**What is the role of the school board and the superintendent?** The school board has a dual role: To represent the concerns of the citizens, taxpayers and parents to the school administrators, and to represent the needs of the students and school district to the citizens, taxpayers and parents of the community. The school board does not manage the day-to-day operations of the district; that is the job of the superintendent, who is the district's chief executive. The school board sets the policies, goals and objectives for the district, and it holds the superintendent responsible for implementing the policies and achieving the goals.

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**I have a problem with my school. Isn't the school board the appropriate body to address it?** Maybe. We recommend working through the chain of command. For instance, if a parent has a problem with a teacher, the parent should first address it with the teacher, and, if the issue is not resolved, the parent should turn to the principal or supervisor and then the assistant superintendent or superintendent. Many times citizens can get answers to their questions simply by calling the appropriate person in the school district (i.e., principal, school board secretary or superintendent).

**Do I have an opportunity to speak at the board meeting?** Yes, but only during the Public Comment portion of the meeting. Residents and parents/guardians of students enrolled in the School District have the expressed right and are encouraged to attend meetings of the school board to listen and observe the deliberations of its members. A Board meeting is either a legislative session, a public input session, and/or a work session. State law requires a public comment period at board meetings. Boards are allowed to establish reasonable restrictions on the time, place and manner of public comment. There is no required format for public comment.

**Will the board respond to public comments?** Generally, no. Boards use the "Public Comment" period as an opportunity to listen to citizen concerns, but not to debate issues or enter into a question-and-answer session between the public and the board. Be aware that not all issues brought before a board meeting can be resolved that evening; boards may respond to public comment by seeking additional information or by delegating the authority to investigate the issue to the superintendent or his/her designee.

**How does the board set its rules at the meeting?** A local school board's parliamentary procedure is a matter of local policy and is set forth in Board Policy 2:220.

**What is a closed session meeting, and why can't the public witness what happens during that time?** The board may conduct closed sessions for the purpose of discussing matters such as staff or student discipline, contract negotiations, and other concerns as outlined by law. Public notice is given of such sessions, and final action of matters discussed in closed session is always taken in public. Generally, school board members are not allowed to publicly discuss the specifics of a closed session meeting.

**What is the board agenda?** Meetings are conducted according to an agenda prepared by the superintendent with input from the board. The agenda allows for an orderly consideration of many issues and concerns. The agenda must reasonably reflect the matters to be discussed. However, the board is not precluded from addressing an issue that arises just because it was not on the agenda. Although, board action cannot be taken on an item not already on the agenda.

**What is a consent agenda?** Many routine items that require board approval may be placed on the consent agenda. The board may approve or disapprove these items considering them as a whole rather than by acting on each item individually. If any board member feels that any item on the consent agenda needs further discussion, the member may request that item be removed from the consent agenda and be considered separately.

**The school board seems to work through the agenda quickly, without much debate. Why is that?** The agenda, along with pertinent background information, is sent to board members in advance to allow members to prepare adequately to make their decisions. Members of the board often contact the superintendent to ask questions and/or discuss specific issues. By the time the board has the meeting where it votes on issues, the agenda items have usually been vetted or studied by board members.

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**PUBLIC COMMENT FORM**

If you wish to participate during the Public Comments portion of the Board Meeting, please complete the form below and return it to the Board Secretary prior to the start of the meeting. Once the meeting has started, additional requests to participate during Public Comments will not be recognized.

When the agenda reaches the Public Comments portion of the Board Meeting, participants will be asked to speak upon recognition of the Board President.

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- Observe the board President's decision to shorten public comment to conserve time and give the maximum number of individuals an opportunity to speak.
- Observe the board President's decision to determine procedural matters regarding public participation not otherwise covered in board policy.
- Conduct oneself with respect and civility toward others and otherwise abide by board Policy, 8:30, Visitors to and Conduct on School Property.
- Petitions or written correspondence to the board shall be presented to the board in the next regular board packet.

Name (Please Print Clearly):

Topic/s:

Are you speaking about an item or items on the agenda? Yes or No

Affiliation (parent of RCS student, community member, staff member, organization name):

Address:

Phone Number:

Email:

Would you like someone to contact you after the meeting? Yes or No