

Orange Southwest School District Board Rules of Procedure

A. PURPOSE.

The Orange Southwest School District (OSSD) Board is required by law to conduct its meetings in accordance with the Vermont Open Meeting Law. 1 V.S.A. §§ 310-314. Meetings of the OSSD Board must be open to the public at all times, except as provided in 1 V.S.A. § 313.

B. APPLICATION.

These rules shall apply to all regular, special, and emergency meetings of the OSSD Board.

C. ORGANIZATION.

1. The OSSD Board shall annually elect a chair and a vice-chair. The chair of the OSSD Board or, in the chair's absence, the vice-chair shall preside over all meetings. If both the chair and the vice-chair are absent, a member selected by the OSSD Board shall act as chair for that meeting.
2. The chair shall preserve order in the meeting and shall regulate its proceedings by applying these rules and Robert's Rules for small boards in making determinations about all questions of order or procedure. In addition, the Chair of the OSSD Board must comply with the OSSD Board's Governance Policy 4.4 Chair's Role.
3. A majority of the members of the OSSD Board (5) shall constitute a quorum. If a quorum of the members of the OSSD Board is not present at a meeting, no meeting shall take place.
4. Motions made by members of the OSSD Board do require a second. The chair of the OSSD Board may make motions and may vote on all questions before the OSSD Board. A motion will only pass if it receives the votes of a majority of the OSSD Board members present at the school board meeting.
5. There is no limit to the number of times a member of the OSSD Board may speak to a question. A member may speak or make a motion without being recognized by the chair. Motions to close or limit debate will not be entertained.
6. Any member of the OSSD Board may request a roll call vote. Pursuant to 1 V.S.A. § 312(a)(2), when one or more members attend a meeting electronically, a roll call vote is required for votes that are not unanimous.
7. Meetings may be recessed to a time and place certain.
8. These rules may be amended by majority vote of the OSSD Board, and must be readopted annually.

D. AGENDAS.

1. Each regular and special meeting of the body shall have an agenda, with time allotted for each item of business to be considered by the OSSD Board. An OSSD Board member may recommend or request an item for Board discussion by submitting the item to the Chair no later than five (5) days before the agenda is to be warned. (Governance Policy 4.3.3 Agenda Planning)
2. At least 48 hours in advance of a regular meeting, and at least 24 hours prior to a special meeting, a meeting agenda will be sent by the OSSD Clerk or their designee to the following locations for posting: the OSSD Central Office, the OSSD Schools and the OSSD Website.
3. All business shall be conducted in the same order as it appears on the noticed agenda, except that any addition to or deletion from the noticed agenda must be made as the first act of business at the meeting. No additions to or deletions from the agenda shall be considered once the first act of business at the meeting has commenced. Any other adjustment to the noticed agenda, for example, changing the order of business, postponing or tabling actions, may be made by majority vote of the OSSD Board.

E. MEETINGS.

1. Regular meetings shall take place on the 2nd Wednesday of the month at 6pm at an OSSD school on a rotating basis. See the meeting schedule on the OSSD website. 48 hours prior to the Regular meetings the OSSD Clerk or their designee will send out warnings to the following: the OSSD Schools, the Brookfield, Braintree, and Randolph Town Clerk's Offices, the OSSD Website, The Herald or WCVR, and to OSSD Board members.
2. The OSSD Clerk or their designee will send out warnings for Special meetings to those listed in E1 at least 24 hours in advance.
3. Emergency meetings may be held without public announcement, without posting of notices, and without 24-hour notice provided some public notice thereof is given as soon as possible before any such meeting. Emergency meetings may be held only when necessary to respond to an unforeseen occurrence or condition requiring immediate attention by the OSSD Board.
4. A member of the OSSD Board may attend a regular, special, or emergency meeting by electronic or other means without being physically present at a designated meeting location, so long as the member identifies him or herself when the meeting is convened, and is able to hear and be heard throughout the meeting. Whenever one or more members attend electronically, voting that is not unanimous must be done by roll call. If a quorum or more of the OSSD Board attend a meeting (regular, special, or emergency) without being physically present at a designated meeting location, the agenda for the meeting shall designate at least one physical location where a member of the public can attend and participate in the meeting. At least one member of the OSSD Board, or at least one staff or designee of the OSSD Board, shall be physically present at the designated meeting location.

F. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.

1. All meetings of the OSSD Board are meetings in the public, not of the public. Members of the public shall be afforded a reasonable opportunity to express opinions about matters considered by the OSSD Board, so long as order is maintained according to these rules.
2. The following persons may address the Board during Public Comment:
 - a. Any district resident
 - b. School staff members, students and parents
 - c. Individuals who have been requested by the superintendent or the board to present a given subject
 - d. Persons who are directly affected by matters on the board agenda
 - e. Others at the discretion of the board
3. There will be time set aside for public input on items not on the agenda at every regular, special or emergency meeting of the board. The time allotted to this item will be assigned by the chair or the person responsible for organizing the agenda.
4. The chair shall rule out of order any comment/presentation to the board which breaches the privacy or other rights of students, parents or school employees, or which does not comply with the Board procedure for complaints.
5. The chair will ask for comments on agenda items before action is taken by the board. The time will be assigned by the chair or the person responsible for moderating the meeting.
6. When the number of people wishing to speak is large, the board may authorize the chair to use a speakers' list. Members of the public will be given an opportunity to sign the speakers' list, indicating which agenda item will be addressed. By majority vote, the OSSD Board may increase the time for open public comment and its place on the agenda.
7. Comments by the public must be addressed to the chair or to the OSSD Board as a whole, and not to any individual member of the OSSD Board or the public.
8. Members of the public must be acknowledged by the chair before speaking and must identify themselves by their first and last name and their town of residence.
9. If a member of the public has already spoken on a topic, he or she may not be recognized again until others have first been given the opportunity to comment.
10. Order and decorum shall be observed by all persons present at the meeting. Neither members of the OSSD Board, nor the members of the public, shall delay or interrupt the proceedings or the peace of the meeting or interrupt or disturb any OSSD Board member while speaking. Members of the OSSD Board and members of the public are prohibited from shouting, using profanity, and repeating comments that have already been expressed.

11. Members of the OSSD Board and members of the public shall obey the orders of the chair or other presiding OSSD Board member. The chair should adhere to the following process to restore order and decorum of a meeting, but may bypass any or all steps when he or she determines in his or her sole discretion that deviation from the process is warranted:

- a. Call the meeting to order and remind the members of the applicable rules of procedure.
- b. Declare a recess or table the issue.
- c. Adjourn the meeting until a time and date certain.
- d. Order the constable to remove disorderly person(s) from the meeting.

G. MINUTES (Adapted from Essential Work of School Boards Spring 2022 version)

1. Minutes of Board meetings are a matter of public record and shall include at least:
 - a. All members of the public body present
 - b. All other active participants in the meeting
 - c. All motions, proposals, and resolutions made, offered, and considered.
 - d. The results of any votes, with a record of the individual vote of each member if a roll call is taken.
2. The OSSD Clerk or their designee is charged with ensuring minutes are taken.
3. Minutes must be made available for inspection by any person upon request after 5 days from the date of any meeting.
4. Meeting minutes must be posted no later than 5 days from the date of the meeting to the website that the district has designated as its official website.

H. COMMITTEES (Adapted from VT School Board Assoc. Open Meeting Law Webinar 5/7/2020)

1. OSSD Board Committees are governed by the OSSD Board's Governance Process Policy 4.6 Board Committee Principles and the Vermont Open Meeting Law. 1 V.S.A. §§ 310-314. Thus, all committees must follow the meeting procedures outlined above with the following changes:
 - a. A quorum will consist of a majority of the Committee Members present.
 - b. The Chair of the Committee will run the meeting, be responsible for setting the agenda, and providing the OSSD Clerk or their designee with the necessary information to warn the meeting.
 - c. A Committee Member will be assigned by the Committee to take minutes and will be responsible for sending the minutes to the OSSD Clerk or their designee so they may be posted to the district's official website no later than 5 days from the date of the meeting.
 - d. Committees that meet multiple times, will approve their minutes at their next meeting and notify the OSSD Clerk or their designee that they have been approved and note if any changes need to be made to the minutes.

Email Communications to Board Members From the General Public

1. Treat as Public Comment
 - a. If the person has an operational question, direct them to the appropriate staff member or to the Superintendent/Assistant Superintendent if you are unsure.
 - b. If the person has a complaint, direct them to OSSD Complaint Procedure.
 - c. If it is a general comment, respond by letting them know that the email was received.
 - d. Thank all people for communicating with the OSSD Board.
2. The Board Chair will be responsible for responding to emails to the OSSD Board.
3. When in doubt about what to do with an email, forward it to the OSSD Board Chair and Vice Chair and to the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent.

In Person Communications to Board Members From the General Public

1. Treat as Public Comment
 - a. If the person has an operational question, direct them to the appropriate staff member or to the Superintendent/Assistant Superintendent if you are unsure.
 - b. If the person has a complaint, direct them to OSSD Complaint Procedure.
 - c. If it is a general comment, listen, and let them know that you will share the comment with the entire OSSD Board at the next meeting.
 - d. Thank all people for communicating with the OSSD Board.
2. When in doubt, let the person know that you are unsure how to respond, but that you will get back to them after connecting with the OSSD Chair, Vice Chair or Superintendent.

Adopted 3/11/2026