



san diego county office of
EDUCATION
FUTURE WITHOUT BOUNDARIESSM

Student Board Member Handbook

Table of Contents

About the San Diego County Office of Education	1
San Diego County Board of Education Members and Districts	1
Roles and Responsibilities	1
Code of Ethics and Conduct	3
About Board Meetings	4
Robert’s Rules of Order and the Brown Act	5
Key Terms	7

Learn more at
www.sdcoe.net/StudentRep



About the San Diego County Office of Education

The San Diego County Office of Education (SDCOE) is inspiring and leading innovation in education so that all students can thrive in a future without boundaries. SDCOE helps the county's school districts operate efficiently and with significant cost savings by leveraging resources to perform personnel tasks and provide staff development and other services. With a focus on equity, innovation, and career technical education, SDCOE directly educates more than 3,000 students at more than 20 sites each year and provides support services to nearly 500,000 students across 42 school districts. For additional information about how SDCOE is innovating education and working to guarantee all students graduate prepared for college, career, and life, visit www.sdcoe.net.

SDCOE's mission is "Inspiring and leading innovation in education."

SDCOE's [North Star](#) is a goal to reduce poverty and increase belongingness through public education. With thriving students at the center of everything we do, our strategy to reach this goal is transformative teaching and learning in [community schools](#).

San Diego County Board of Education Members and Districts

The San Diego County Board of Education is divided into five trustee areas. Each January, the board of education selects a new president and vice president. For a list of trustee areas, board members, their bios, photos, and leadership positions, visit www.sdcoe.net/board.

Student board members to represent each of the five district areas are selected each spring. A list of present and past board members is available at www.sdcoe.ent/studentreps.

The board secretary is Danielle Clark, who can be reached at danielle.clark@sdcoe.net or 858-298-2073.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Role of County Offices of Education

California has a three-level system of public education, which includes the California Department of Education (CDE), county offices of education, and local school districts. Regulations, funding, and policy decisions are generally established at the state level, while the day-to-day delivery of instruction is the responsibility of the more than 1,000 school districts throughout the state. The 58 county offices of education are the intermediate level of the public education system. County offices provide a support infrastructure for local schools and districts. They also fulfill state mandates to register teacher credentials, complete employee background checks, certify school attendance records, and develop countywide programs to serve students with special needs.

The Role of the County Superintendent of Schools

The San Diego County superintendent of schools, appointed by the County Board of Education, is the chief administrative officer, employer, and developer of programs and services as authorized by state statute or determined by needs or requests. The superintendent also provides educational leadership and administers mandated services. The superintendent has direct oversight responsibilities for approving and assuring school district budgets, calling school district elections, and assisting with school district emergencies by providing necessary services. The superintendent is also tasked with developing a three-year Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) for the schools operated by SDCOE, and reviewing and approving the LCAPs for all school districts in San Diego County.

The Role of the County Board of Education

The County Board of Education operates under the authority of the California Constitution, the state Legislature, California Education Code, and the State Board of Education. Among other duties, the board is responsible for:

- Adopting the annual County Office of Education LCAP and budget
- Adopting policies governing the operation of the board acting as the appeals board for student expulsions, interdistrict transfers, and charter school petitions
- Acting as the County Committee on School District Organization to review and approve proposals to change the way school district governing board members are elected
- Hiring and evaluating the county superintendent and establishing the rate of compensation
- Serving as the landlord and owner of property

Through its role of long-range policy development and other critical functions, the board works with the county superintendent of schools to offer the most effective education programs and district support services. The board also encourages the involvement of families and communities, and is a vehicle for anyone to communicate about SDCOE's programs and services.

Student Board Members

[Board Bylaw 9150](#), which establishes the positions of student board members, outlines the roles and responsibilities for student board members:

- A student board member shall have the right to attend all board meetings except closed sessions.
- All materials presented to board members, except those related to closed sessions and special or emergency meetings, shall be presented to a student board member at the same time they are presented to voting board members.
- A student board member shall be recognized at board meetings as a full member, shall be seated with other members of the board, and shall be allowed to participate in questioning witnesses and discussing issues.

- A student board member shall be allowed to cast preferential votes on all matters except those subject to closed session discussion. Preferential voting means a formal expression of opinion that is recorded in the minutes. The preferential vote of the student board member shall not be included in determining the vote required to carry any measure before the County Board of Education.
- A student board member may make motions that may be acted upon by the County Board of Education, except on matters dealing with employer-employee relations pursuant to Government Code sections 3540-3549.3.
- A student board member shall not be liable for any acts of the County Board of Education.
- A student board member shall be entitled to be reimbursed for mileage to the same extent as other members of the County Board of Education but shall not receive compensation for attendance at Board meetings.

If the County Board of Education determines that a student board member's duties are not being fulfilled, the board may appoint another student to serve out the remaining term as an alternate student board member. If an alternate student board member is appointed, the board shall terminate the prior student board member's rights and privileges related to service on the County Board of Education.

Code of Ethics and Conduct

[Board Bylaw 9010](#) outlines the following standards that are also broadly applicable to student board members:

- County board members should be role models of professional behavior, and be mindful to be civil, reasonable, patient and courteous, and work to avoid sarcasm, raised voices, and condescending tones when discussing conflicting opinions.
- When speaking to community groups, members of the public, or the media, individual County Board members should recognize that their statements may be perceived as reflecting the views and positions of the County Board. County Board members have a responsibility to explicitly identify personal viewpoints as such and not as the viewpoint of the County Board.
- County Board members who participate on social networking sites, blogs, or other discussion or informational sites are encouraged to conduct themselves in a respectful, courteous, and professional manner and to model good behavior for SDCOE students and the community. Such electronic communications are subject to the same standards and protocols established for other forms of communication, and the disclosure requirements of the California Public Records Act may likewise apply to them.
- County Board members are responsible to members of the public to uphold the highest standards of ethics.

About Board Meetings

The main purpose of public participation at board meetings is to help inform board deliberations, and not to address the community or audience. Public comment—held at the beginning of each board meeting—gives members of the community a set amount of time to speak to the board. However, board members cannot reply to comments made on topics that are not on the board agenda.

Board meetings always abide by Robert’s Rules of Order and comply with the Brown Act. Board members have no power to act individually in the name of the entire board. Action can only be taken when a majority of the board is in formal session.

Regular board meetings generally follow this order:

- Opening Provisions
 - This includes a call to order and roll call, the Pledge of Allegiance, approval of the agenda, and recognition of student representatives.
- Recognitions and Presentations
 - Items presented to the board for informational purposes or discussion. No action is taken.
- Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items
 - The chance for speakers to address the board on topics that are not specifically listed on the agenda.
- Associations Commentary
 - Representatives from SDCOE’s labor organizations share updates with the board.
- Consent Items
 - Items that are considered to be routine in nature and are enacted in one motion.
- Information Items
 - Items are presented to the board for informational purposes or discussion.
- Action Items
 - Items that are presented for review prior to board action. Staff will typically present. The board will take public comment and then discuss prior to action.
- Public Hearings
 - A public hearing is designed to protect personal interests by permitting citizens to voice their position on an issue at hand. Government Code prescribes the manner in which the hearing is to be conducted.
- Board/Student Board Member/Superintendent Reports
 - Allows individual board members, including the student board member, and the superintendent to share reports, comments, concerns, observations, or request items be scheduled on a future agenda.

Community members can participate in board meetings by:

- Attending a board meeting in person
- Watching a board meeting online or on [iTV Cable 16](#)
- Following the meeting through [SDCOE's X \(formerly Twitter\) account](#)
- Submitting a public comment in-person or [submitting a comment via the SDCOE website](#)

[Access our board meeting agendas.](#)

Robert's Rules of Order and the Brown Act

Robert's Rules of Order

Robert's Rules of Order is a series of procedures that govern the meetings you will attend. Under Robert's Rules, action by the board is generally taken in a series of steps:

- Motion Request: The president requests a motion from the board for the agenda item.
- Motion: A member makes a motion.
- Second: A different member seconds the motion.
- Debate: The members debate the motion.
- Vote: A roll call vote is taken (ayes, nays, abstentions).
- Announce the Vote: The result of the vote is announced.

Note: If more than one motion is proposed, the most recent takes precedence over the preceding motion(s).

The Brown Act

The Ralph M. Brown Act, often called California's "open meetings law," was passed in 1953 to ensure that elected bodies are accessible to the public, transparent, and hold accessible meetings. It also defines the different types of meetings a board can hold.

- The Brown Act prevents board members from discussing policy privately. Having a discussion with a board member over social media concerning a policy is prohibited by this law.
- Because of this act, all meetings of the board must have a properly prepared and posted agenda, which is released to board members and the public 72 hours before the actual meeting. Board members are prohibited from discussing topics at public meetings that are not on the agenda.
- At board meetings, there are closed and open sessions. Student board members and the public do not participate in closed session meetings, which usually concern personnel matters like superintendent evaluation or litigation.

- This act also mandates that all board members' votes on actions must be recorded and taken in roll call.

How this applies to you:

- carefully before sending an email, posting on social media, or having conversations: do not communicate your position on an issue. However, if you have a question on a piece of the agenda, feel free to ask for clarification or make note of it to ask at the meeting.
- Before each meeting, an agenda will be posted and sent to you. You and the public have access to the same agenda. This helps everyone be prepared for the meeting and ensures community members can come forward if they have concerns or opinions.
- Student board members have a [preferential vote](#), however their votes do not determine whether a motion passes.

Key Terms

Regular Meeting

The board approves a year-long calendar of regular board meetings during the annual organizational meeting held in January. Regular meeting agendas must be posted at least 72 hours before the meeting and must allow public comment on both agenda and non-agenda items.

Special Meeting

If the board needs to conduct business outside of regular meetings, they will schedule a “special” meeting. Special meetings often facilitate study sessions, board workshops or presentations, and can also be scheduled to address business that is time sensitive. Agendas must be posted 24 hours before special meetings and only allow for public comment on items on the agenda.

Student board members are not expected to attend special meetings.

Closed Session

Only matters legally allowed by the Brown Act will be discussed in closed session. These matters include employee contract negotiations, district litigation, personnel matters, and the superintendent evaluation. Closed session meetings must be part of a regular meeting or a special meeting and will allow for public comment prior to the board beginning a closed session.

Action in closed session is reserved for only specific types of items (Ed Code 54954.5). Actions taken in closed session will be reported out in accordance with the law.

Emergency Meeting

An emergency meeting will be held in case of an emergency situation for which prompt action is necessary due to the disruption or threatened disruption of public facilities.

Student board members are not expected to attend emergency meetings.

Motion

To introduce a new piece of business or propose a decision or action, a motion must be made by a board member (“I move that.....”). A second motion must then also be made (“I second it.”). After discussion, the group then votes on the motion. A majority vote is required for the motion to pass.

Amend

This is the process used to change a motion under consideration. Perhaps you like the idea proposed, but not exactly as offered. Make the following motion: “I move to amend the motion.” This also requires a second. After the motion to amend is seconded, a majority vote is needed to decide whether the amendment is accepted. Then a vote is taken on the amended motion.

Table

To table a discussion is to lay aside the business at hand in such a manner that it will be considered later in the meeting or at another time ("I make a motion to table this discussion until the next meeting. In the meantime, we will get more information so we can better discuss the issue."). A second motion and a majority vote are required to table the item being discussed.

Adjourn

A motion is made to end the meeting.

Board Policy (BP)

Policies are principles and guidelines adopted by the board in support of the county office goals and guide administrative decisions. Policies convey standards and set parameters for compliance with legal requirements. Existing law supersedes a board policy.

Administrative Regulation (AR)

Regulations are detailed guidelines developed by the county superintendent of schools and leadership team within the parameters established by board policies. The superintendent is empowered with the authority to establish and modify administrative regulations without prior approval of the Board, although we bring ARs before the board for transparency purposes.

Board Bylaw (BB)

Board bylaws are core legal documents that define/outline the structure and operation of the governing board.

Education Acronyms

Educational terminology can be overwhelming with so many acronyms and buzzwords to remember. The California Department of Education offers this list of common acronyms and initialisms.

Created July 2024