



# *Planning Board Meetings*

## NEW SUPERINTENDENTS GUIDANCE DOCUMENT NYSCOSS

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*Planning a board meeting is one of the tasks first time superintendents may not have any experience with. The following outlines an effective manner to prepare for board meetings and suggested ways to develop an agenda. Remember, very few actions may take place during executive session. Adhere to legal requirements and ensure all necessary discussions appropriately take place in a public forum.*

### **Planning the Agenda**

#### **Agenda Building Guidelines**

- Maintain the individuality of the Board
- Plan the meeting with the audience in mind
- Keep all meetings short
- Pull no surprises

Note: Agenda format, preparation, timing and distribution are usually regulated by board policy.

### **Agenda Order**

#### **First Things First**

- Action items first to assist media with deadlines and please audience
- Create energy higher
- Controversial topics first to ensure adequate attention

#### **The Meeting Middle**

- Include controversial topics if interest seems to be waning
- Separate items by importance
- Separate action items from informational ones
- Alternate divisive items with those that unite

## Friendly Ending

- Put controversial topics at end to get through all other agenda items
- End in unity, and on a friendly, positive note

## **Sample Agendas**

### TYPICAL FORMAT:

1. Call to order
2. Roll call of members
3. Approval of minutes
4. Communications and petitions
5. Visitors
6. Report from superintendent
7. Old business
8. New business
9. Adjournment

ALTERNATIVE METHOD: An alternate method clearly segregates items calling for school board action from those intended merely to keep the board informed:

1. Call to order
2. Approval of minutes
3. Visitors and communications
4. Action items
5. Information items
6. Unfinished business
7. New business
8. Adjournment

## ALTERNATIVE 2:

1. Call meeting to order
2. Roll call
3. Establish a quorum
4. Approve minutes
5. Hear communications
6. Hear ind. Communications
7. Accept superintendent report
8. Deal with unfinished business
9. Deal with new business
10. Bring up any miscellaneous matters
11. Adjourn

### **Consent Agenda**

- Combines routine items
- Saves time for important issues
- Flexible- items can be removed when necessary
- Saves recording time
- Covered by one agenda item

### **Minutes**

- Name of school and city or town
- Date, time, location of meeting
- Type of meeting
- Members present or absent
- Presiding officer
- Business transacted
- Adjournment time

## IT'S LAW THAT:

- Taping of school board meetings by the public is legal
- School boards must make all records available to the public, except those portions that are specifically exempted by state or federal statute, where disclosure:
  - Would result in an unwarranted invasion of privacy
  - Would impair contract awards or collective bargaining
  - Would cause substantial injury to a competitive position
  - Would interfere with law enforcement investigations of judicial proceedings
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  - Would deprive a person of a right to a fair trial or impartial adjudication
  - Would deprive a person of a right to a fair trial or impartial adjudication
  - Would identify confidential source or disclosure confidential information relating to a criminal investigations
  - Would reveal criminal investigative techniques and procedures
  - Would endanger the life or safety of any person
  - Pertains to examination questions or answers requested prior to the final usage of such questions

**SOURCE:** NYSCOSS *New Superintendents Handbook*; *School Law, 30<sup>th</sup> Edition* published by NYSSBA and NYSBA.