

BOARD MEETINGS

Code **BE** Issued **1/17**

Purpose: To establish the basic structure for the conduct of board meetings.

All board meetings shall be conducted in accordance with the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act. All board meetings, except those in executive session, are open to the public.

Annual Meeting

The board holds its annual organizational meeting at the first board meeting in November. The board elects officers at the annual meeting.

Board Meetings

The board meets at the district office on the fourth Monday of each month, with open session starting at 5:15 p.m.

In unusual circumstances, the board may change the time and place of the regular meeting upon a majority vote and proper public notice.

Executive Session

Board may go into executive session by a majority vote, and may include others at its discretion. Upon a vote to go into executive session, the chair must state the specific purpose of the executive session.

Proper topics for executive session are:

- student actions, such as hearings, transfers, or other matters
- personnel matters, unless the employee wants the matter to be discussed in open session
- contract negotiations
- acquisition or sale of property
- legal advice
- matters of security
- investigations of criminal conduct

No formal action may be taken in executive session. Formal action means a recorded vote committing the board to a specific course of action.

The board shall not take a vote in executive session, nor shall it poll its members in executive session. The board may only vote in open session.

Board members and other persons attending are duty-bound not to disclose matters discussed in executive session.

Work Sessions

The purpose of work sessions is for the board to have opportunities for planning and discussion without formal action. Board members may suggest topics for work sessions. Topics for discussion shall be announced publicly and sessions shall be conducted in accordance with the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act.

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Special Meetings

The chairman of the board, or a majority of members of the board, may call a special meeting of the full board. The superintendent shall give at least 24 hours notice to all members of the board and to the public except when emergency conditions make such notice impossible. The board shall not transact any business other than that which is stated in the agenda, unless matters are timely added consistent with the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act.

Public Comment

Board meetings shall be conducted in an orderly and efficient manner. Reasonable controls shall regulate public presentations to the board.

Any individual who desires to appear before a regular meeting of the board shall sign in prior to the 5:15 p.m. open session and will be allowed a maximum of two minutes to address the board.

A suitable visible timing device shall be employed and it shall audibly mark the end of the presentation period.

No speaker may use public comment to discuss personnel matters or matters otherwise private or confidential. Speakers are to discuss issues, not individuals.

The chairman or designee is authorized to terminate any speaker's time who does not observe this policy.

Public Hearings

The board may conduct a hearing on any issue it deems appropriate. When a large delegation comes before the board, individuals wishing to speak shall sign in and indicate their position, for or against, on a particular issue. The board may not hear from those who do not follow this protocol.

The chairman opens and states the purpose of the hearing and the board or staff may present information on the issue.

Individuals who wish to comment shall be heard. Efforts will be made to answer questions at that time.

After the chairman closes public discussion, when appropriate, the board may deliberate and take action at that meeting.

Parliamentary Procedure

The latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order shall govern all matters not covered by the rules of the board.

Conduct During Meetings

To ensure that the board's business meetings are conducted with maximum effectiveness and efficiency, members will:

- come to meetings adequately prepared
- speak only when recognized
- not interrupt each other
- not engage in side conversations
- not repeat what has already been said

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- not play to the audience or monopolize the discussion
- support the chairman's efforts to facilitate an orderly meeting
- communicate openly and actively in discussion and dialog to avoid surprises
- encourage balanced participation of all members
- practice respectful body language

Consent Agenda

The board will use a consent agenda as a means to expedite the disposition of routine matters and dispose of other items of business previously and adequately vetted. All administrative matters delegated to the superintendent that are required to be approved by the board will be acted upon by the board via the consent agenda. The chairman shall ask at the beginning of each meeting if any board member wishes to remove an item from the consent agenda. A total of three members must agree to remove the item.

Meeting Attendance

Absence without just cause from five consecutive meetings is cause for removal by a majority vote of the board.

Board Minutes

The minutes of the board meeting constitute the written record of board action. The minutes are legal evidence of the board's action. The board secretary/clerk shall keep a complete record of the action of board meetings per the Freedom of Information Act.

Minutes shall include, at a minimum:

- date, time, and place of the meeting
- members recorded as either present or absent
- the substance of all materials proposed, discussed, or decided and a record, by individual member, of any votes taken
- any other information that any member asks to be included or reflected

The minutes shall become permanent records of the board and shall be in the custody of the superintendent who shall make them available to interested citizens of the district by all reasonable means, including the district website, and upon request, with exceptions as provided by law, at reasonable times during the working day.

Cancellation of Meetings

A board meeting may be cancelled:

- by a majority vote of the board at a duly called board meeting
- by a declaration by the board chair, or if the chair is unavailable, the vice chair, in consultation with the superintendent, when a significant event beyond the board's control renders attendance at the meeting unsafe or unreasonable in light of the circumstances (e.g., inclement weather conditions or local, state, or national emergencies)
- when a quorum cannot be reached

Adopted 12/8/75; Revised 12/8/86, 11/11/91, 12/11/95, 7/26/04, 3/14/11, 11/9/15, 1/23/17

Legal references:

A. S.C. Code, 1976, as amended:

1. Sections 30-4-10 through 30-4-110 - South Carolina Freedom of Information Act.
2. Section 59-1-340 - Meetings of boards of trustees and boards of education.

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3. Section 59-19-90(4) - Calling meetings of electors for consultations.
4. Section 59-19-110 - Board rule-making power includes right to conduct any hearing.

B. Acts and Joint Resolutions:

1. 1967 Act 340 - Creates the School District of Charleston County and abolishes the county board of education; sets forth the powers of the constituent district boards.
2. 1983 Act 230 - Amends 1967 Act 340 to increase the number of meetings which the trustees may be paid for attending.