

**EL DORADO UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
BYLAWS**

Bylaws of the Board

**MEETINGS AND NOTICES
BB 9320**

Meetings of the Governing Board are conducted for the purpose of accomplishing district business. In accordance with state open meeting laws (Brown Act, *GC 54950*), the Board shall hold its meetings in public and shall conduct closed sessions during these meetings only as authorized by law. To encourage community involvement in the schools, meetings shall provide opportunities for questions and comments by members of the public. All meetings shall be conducted in accordance with law and Board bylaws, policies and administrative regulations.

(cf. 9321 - Closed Sessions Purposes and Agendas)

(cf. 9321.1 - Closed Session Actions and Reports)

(cf. 9322 – Agenda/Meeting Material)

(cf. 9323 - Meeting Conduct)

A Board meeting exists whenever a majority of Board members gather at the same time and place to hear, discuss, or deliberate upon any item within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Board or district. (*Government Code 54952.2*)

Note: The Brown Act prohibits serial meetings, defined under Government Code 54952.2 as a series of communications of any kind, directly or through intermediaries, to discuss, deliberate, or take action on any item of district business. However, Government Code 54952.2 specifies that briefings between staff and Board members are permissible in order to answer questions or to provide information, as long as the briefing is not used to communicate the comments or position of any other Board member. Thus, Superintendent briefings involving less than a majority of the Board are allowed, but participants must ensure that the comments or positions of one member are not shared with other members.

This prohibition against serial meetings also applies to communications via technology. Email exchanges, chat room threads, or comments posted on a blog that result in a majority of the Board "discussing" an item within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Board could result in a Brown Act violation.

In 84 Ops. Cal. Atty. Gen. 30 (2001), the Attorney General opined that Government Code 54952.2 prohibits a majority of the Board from sending e-mails to each other to develop a collective concurrence as to action to be taken by the board even if the e-mails are (1) sent to the secretary or chairperson, (2) posted on the district's web site, and (3) distributed at the next meeting. Although the Attorney General recognized that those three conditions would allow the deliberations to be conducted, to some extent, "in public," the e-mails were prohibited by the Brown Act because all debate would be completed before the meeting and members of the public who did not have Internet access would be excluded from the debate.

A majority of the Board shall not, outside of an authorized meeting, use a series of communications of any kind, directly or through intermediaries, to discuss, deliberate, or take action on any item that is within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Board. However, an employee or district official may engage in separate conversations with Board members in order to answer questions or provide information regarding an item within the subject matter

jurisdiction of the Board, as long as that employee or district official does not communicate the comments or position of any Board members to other Board members. (*Government Code 54952.2*)

In order to help ensure participation of individuals with disabilities at Board meetings, the Superintendent or designee shall provide appropriate disability-related accommodations or modifications upon request in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. (*Government Code 54953.2, 54954.1*)

REGULAR MEETINGS

The Board shall hold two regular meetings each month to be held on the second and fourth Tuesday of the month, unless otherwise directed by Board action or otherwise stipulated in this policy.

Regular meetings shall be held at the following times:

- **Closed Session** meetings will typically start at 5:00 p.m., unless otherwise predetermined by the Board. The start time for each Closed Session meeting will be specified on the Board agenda. The Board will immediately enter Closed Session after the opening unless there are members of the public present to comment on an item scheduled for Closed Session review/action by the Board.
- **Open Session** (for the general public to attend) will typically start at 6:00 p.m., unless otherwise predetermined by the Board. The start time for each meeting will be specified on the Board agenda.

The following changes will be made permanent to the Board meeting schedule, unless otherwise directed by future Board action.

- **No Board Meeting** will be held during the school year on a day that falls during a week of school **vacation**
- **One Board meeting** will be held in **August, November, December, and May** on the second or third Tuesday, unless otherwise directed by Board action.
- **No Regular Board Meetings** will be held in **July**. However, the Board will have the option to hold a discretionary Board meeting in July if district business requires such a meeting.

All meetings of the Board shall be held in the Boardroom of the District Office unless the occasion requires otherwise or unless a determination is made at a prior regular meeting to hold the meeting in another location. The Board agenda will reflect the location, and the agenda shall be distributed within the appropriate time frames specified in this Board Bylaw.

At least 72 hours prior to a regular meeting, the agenda shall be posted at one or more locations freely accessible to members of the public and on the district's Internet web site. (*Government Code 54954.2*)

Whenever agenda materials relating to an open session of a regular meeting are distributed to the Board less than 72 hours before the meeting, the Superintendent or designee shall make the materials available for public inspection at a public office or location designated for that purpose. (*Government Code 54957.5*)

(*cf. 1340 – Access to District Records*)

SPECIAL MEETINGS

Special meetings of the Board may be called at any time by the presiding officer or a majority of the Board members. However, a special meeting shall not be called regarding the salary, salary schedule, or other compensation of the Superintendent, assistant superintendent, or other management employee as described in Government Code 3511.1. (*Government Code 54956*)

(*cf. 2121 – Superintendent's Contract*)

Written notice of special meetings shall be delivered personally or by any other means to all Board members and to the local media who have requested such notice in writing. This notice also shall be posted on the district's Internet web site. The notice shall be received at least 24 hours before the time of the meeting. The notice shall also be posted at least 24 hours before the meeting in a location freely accessible to the public. This notice shall specify the time and place of the meeting and the business to be transacted or discussed; no other business shall be considered at these meetings. (*Education Code 35144, Government Code 54956*)

Any Board member may waive the 24-hour written notice requirement prior to the time of the meeting by filing a written waiver of notice with the clerk or secretary of the Board or by being present at the meeting at the time it convenes. (*Government Code 54956*)

Every notice of a special meeting shall provide an opportunity for members of the public to directly address the Board concerning any item that has been described in the meeting notice, before or after the item's consideration. (*Government Code 54954.3*)

EMERGENCY MEETINGS

In the case of an emergency situation for which prompt action is necessary due to the disruption or threatened disruption of public facilities, the Board may hold an emergency meeting without complying with the 24-hour notice and/or 24-hour posting requirement for special meetings pursuant to Government Code 54956. The Board shall comply with all other requirements for special meetings during an emergency meeting. (*Government Code 54956.5*)

An **emergency situation** means either of the following: (*Government Code 54956.5*)

1. A work stoppage, crippling activity, or other activity that severely impairs public health and/or safety as determined by a majority of the members of the Board.
2. A dire emergency, which shall be defined as a crippling disaster, mass destruction, terrorist activity, or threatened terrorist act that poses peril so immediate and significant

that requiring the Board to provide 1-hour notice before holding an emergency meeting under this section may endanger the public health, safety, or both, as determined by a majority of the members of the Board.

(cf. 3516 - Emergencies and Disaster Preparedness Plan)

Except in the case of a dire emergency, the Board president or designee shall give notice of the emergency meeting by telephone at least 1 hour before the meeting to the local media that have requested notice of special meetings. All telephone numbers provided by the media in the most recent request for notification must be exhausted. If telephone services are not functioning, the notice requirement of 1 hour is waived and, as soon after the meeting as possible, the Board shall notify those media representatives of the meeting and shall describe the purpose of the meeting and any action taken by the Board. In the case of a dire emergency, the Board president or designee shall give such notice at or near the time he/she notifies the other members of the Board about the meeting. *(Government Code 54956.5)*

The minutes of the meeting, a list of persons the Board president or designee notified or attempted to notify, a copy of the roll call vote, and any actions taken at the meeting shall be posted for at least 10 days in a public place as soon after the meeting as possible. *(Government Code 54956.5)*

ADJOURNED/CONTINUED MEETINGS

A majority vote by the Board may adjourn/continue any regular or special meeting to a later time and place that shall be specified in the order of adjournment. Less than a quorum of the Board may adjourn such a meeting. If no Board members are present, the secretary or the clerk may declare the meeting adjourned to a later time and shall give notice in the same manner required for special meetings. *(Government Code 54955)*

Within 24 hours after the time of adjournment, a copy of the order or notice of adjournment/continuance shall be conspicuously posted on or near the door of the place where the meeting was held. *(Government Code 54955)*

STUDY SESSIONS, RETREATS, PUBLIC FORUMS, AND DISCUSSION MEETINGS

The Board may occasionally convene a study session or public forum to study an issue in more detail or to receive information from staff or feedback from members of the public.

The Board may also convene a retreat or discussion meeting to discuss Board roles and relationships.

(cf. 2000 - Concepts and Roles)

(cf. 2111 - Superintendent Governance Standards)

(cf. 9000 - Role of the Board)

(cf. 9005 - Governance Standards)

(cf. 9400 - Board Self-Evaluation)

Public notice shall be given in accordance with law when a quorum of the Board is attending a study session, retreat, public forum, or discussion meetings. All such meetings shall comply with the Brown Act and shall be held in open session and within district boundaries. No action item shall be included on the agenda for these meetings.

OTHER GATHERINGS

Attendance by a majority of the Board members at any of the following events is not subject to the Brown Act provided that a majority of the Board members do not discuss specific district business among themselves other than as part of the scheduled program: (*Government Code 54952.2*)

1. A conference or similar public gathering open to the public that involves a discussion of issues of general interest to the public or to school board members
2. An open, publicized meeting organized by a person or organization other than the district to address a topic of local community concern
3. An open and noticed meeting of another body of the district
4. An open and noticed meeting of a legislative body of another local agency
5. A purely social or ceremonial occasion
6. An open and noticed meeting of a standing committee of the Board, provided that the Board members who are not members of the standing committee attend only as observers.

(*cf. 9130 - Board Committees*)

Individual contacts or conversations between a Board member and any other person are not subject to the Brown Act. (*Government Code 54952.2*)

LOCATION OF MEETINGS

Meetings shall not be held in a facility that prohibits the admittance of any person on the basis of ancestry or any characteristic listed in Government Code 11135, including, but not limited to, religion, sex, or sexual orientation. In addition, meetings shall not be held in a facility that is inaccessible to individuals with disabilities or where members of the public must make a payment or purchase in order to be admitted. (*Government Code 54961*)

(*cf. 0410 - Nondiscrimination in District Programs and Activities*)

Meetings shall be held within district boundaries, except to do any of the following: (*Government Code 54954*)

1. Comply with state or federal law or court order or attend a judicial or administrative proceeding to which the district is a party

2. Inspect real or personal property which cannot conveniently be brought into the district, provided that the topic of the meeting is limited to items directly related to the property
3. Participate in meetings or discussion of multiagency significance, provided these meetings are held within one of the other agencies' boundaries, with all participating agencies giving the notice required by law
4. Meet in the closest meeting facility if the district has no meeting facility within its boundaries or if its principal office is located outside the district
5. Meet with elected or appointed state or federal officials when a local meeting would be impractical, solely to discuss legislative or regulatory issues affecting the district over which the state or federal officials have jurisdiction
6. Meet in or near a facility owned by the district but located outside the district, provided the meeting is limited to items directly related to that facility
7. Visit the office of the district's legal counsel for a closed session on pending litigation, when doing so would reduce legal fees or costs
8. Attend conferences on nonadversarial collective bargaining techniques
9. Interview residents of another district regarding the Board's potential employment of an applicant for Superintendent of the district
10. Interview a potential employee from another district.

Meetings exempted from the boundary requirements, as specified in items #1-10 above, shall still be subject to the notice and open meeting requirements for regular and special meetings when a quorum of the Board attends the meeting.

If a fire, flood, earthquake, or other emergency renders the regular meeting place unsafe, meetings shall be held for the duration of the emergency at a place designated by the Board president or designee, who shall so inform all news media who have requested notice of special meetings by the most rapid available means of communication. (*Government Code 54954*)

TELECONFERENCING

A teleconference is a meeting of the Board in which Board members are in different locations, connected by electronic means through audio and/or video. (*Government Code 54953*)

The Board may use teleconferences for all purposes in connection with any meeting within the Board's subject matter jurisdiction. All votes taken during a teleconference meeting shall be by roll call. (*Government Code 54953*)

During the teleconference, at least a quorum of the members of the Board shall participate from locations within district boundaries. (*Government Code 54953*)

Agendas shall be posted at all teleconferences locations and shall list all teleconference locations whenever they are posted elsewhere. Additional teleconference locations may be provided to the public. (*Government Code 54953*)

All teleconferenced meetings shall be accessible to the public. All teleconference meetings shall be conducted in a manner that protects the statutory and constitutional rights of the parties or the public appearing before the Board, including the right of the public to address the Board directly at each teleconference location. (*Government Code 54953*)

All Board policies, administrative regulations, and bylaws shall apply equally to meetings that are teleconferenced. The Superintendent or designee shall facilitate public participation in the meeting at each teleconferenced location.

Legal References:

EDUCATION CODE

- 35140 Time and place of meetings*
- 35143 Annual organizational meeting date, and notice*
- 35144 Special meeting*
- 35145 Public meetings*
- 35145.5 Agenda; public participation; regulations*
- 35146 Closed sessions*
- 35147 Open meeting law exceptions and applications*

GOVERNMENT CODE

- 3511.1 Local agency executives*
- 11135 State programs and activities, discrimination*
- 54950-54963 Time and place of meetings*
- 54953 Meetings to be open and public; attendance*
- 54954 Time and place of regular meetings; holidays; emergencies*
- 54954.2 Agenda posting requirements, board actions*
- 54956 Special meetings; call; notice*
- 54956.5 Emergency meetings in emergency situations*

UNITED STATES CODE, TITLE 42

- 12101-12213 Americans With Disabilities Act*

CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS, TITLE 28

- 35.160 Effective communications*
- 36.303 Auxiliary aids and services*

COURT DECISIONS

- Wolfe v. City of Fremont, (2006) 144 Cal.App. 544*

ATTORNEY GENERAL OPINIONS

- 88 Ops.Cal.Atty.Gen. 218 (2005)*
- 84 Ops.Cal.Atty.Gen. 181 (2001)*
- 84 Ops.Cal.Atty.Gen. 30 (2001)*
- 79 Ops.Cal.Atty.Gen. 69 (1996)*
- 78 Ops.Cal.Atty.Gen. 327 (1995)*

Management Resource:

CSBA PUBLICATIONS

The Brown Act: School Boards and Open Meeting Laws, rev. 2009

INSTITUTE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS

The ABCs of Open Government Laws

LEAGUE OF CALIFORNIA CITIES PUBLICATIONS

Open and Public IV: A Guide to the Ralph M. Brown Act, 2nd Ed., 2010

WEB SITES

CSBA: <http://www.csba.org>

CSBA, Agenda Online:

<http://www.csba.org/Services/Services/GovernanceTechnology/AgendaOnline.aspx>

California Attorney General's Office: <http://www.ag.ca.gov>

Institute for Local Government: <http://www.ca-ilg.org>