

Meaningful Meetings: More than Just Going Through the Motions

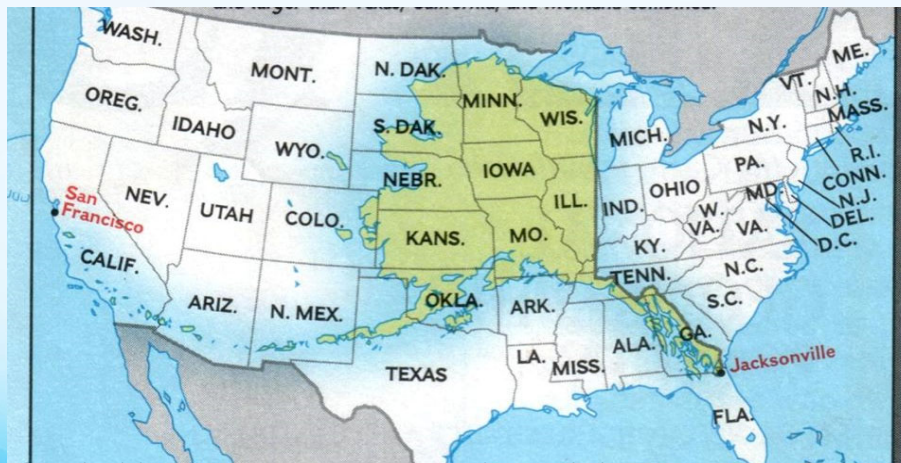
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Let's Get this Out of the Way!



53 school districts covering 663,300 square miles. North Slope School District is 88,700 square miles, bigger than the state of Minnesota and 40 other states. Our smallest school district



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Kick off

Turn to someone near you and discuss the most inappropriate or out of line issue you have ever seen in a school board meeting.



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WHAT DOES AN EFFECTIVE MEETING LOOK LIKE TO YOU?



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IS A MEETING NEEDED?

WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACCOMPLISH?



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Setting The Agenda

- Board members know how to add items to the agenda
- Agendas are clear
- Public knows when/where they can provide input and the guidelines for providing input
- Action items are clear
- Agenda inline with Board Standards
- Stick to the agenda



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The Role of the Chair

- The chair is the most important and at the same time least important person at the table.
- Works with Superintendent to prepare agenda
- Call meeting to order
- Establish quorum
- Stick to the 'orders of the day' or agenda
- Recognizes others
- Ensures equity amongst all members of the board,
- "Firm but ruthless!"



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It's the little things...

- What is the role of the chair vs members of the board
- What does the chair need to conduct a successful meeting?
- Where people sit matter.
- Who is at your board table?



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Public Comment Tips for Positive Interaction

- Make agenda readily available in advance of meeting
- Make materials available for the public to view, or make known where the public can access material.
- The board should set guidelines for public comment and inform the public of these guidelines.



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Make Public Comment Structure Clear

- When does the board accept public comment?
- How long can someone speak?
- How does your board ensuring employee/student rights are protected?
- If you've gone digital, prepare your public (same goes for guest presenters)



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School board meetings are held in public, but are NOT public meetings!



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Set Clear Board Member Expectations

All Members should:

- Read the meeting packet before hand,
- Note any questions they may have,
- Let the Superintendent know ahead of time of any questions you have,
- Let the Superintendent know if there are any issue you're aware the public may bring up.



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WHY GIVE THE SUPERINTENDENT A HEADS UP?

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Positive Relationships, Transparency, and Efficiency

- The public can tell when the board and the superintendent are at odds,
- Advance notice of an issue allows the Superintendent an opportunity to be prepared to answer, especially if the question requires research or is detailed,
- Time isn't wasted trying to research info on the fly, or informing the board the answer will have to come later.



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Staff Reports; Written? Verbal? Combination?

- When a written report is included in packet, a full verbal report is not necessary,
- Highlights of written report or recent updates are areas that could be verbally given at the meeting,

*Written reports from the packet should NOT be read at the meeting,

- Board has opportunity to ask questions,
- Staff should be notified by the superintendent before hand if any questions are anticipated.



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How Does it all Begin?

- Motion made, and seconded,
- Chair states the OFFICAL language of the motion for the record,
- Then let the fun begin



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Facilitating the Discussion once a Motion is on the floor

- Make sure everyone gets a chance to talk,
- “Okay, what I’m hearing is this... is that correct?”
- Track who has spoken and who is next in line to speak
- Discussion is NOT a conversation it is ‘debate’ and has its own rules,
- Beware of conversations that drift down the bunny trail



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What MUST happen AFTER a vote!

Chair....

... states result,

...states if motion passes or fails,

...what happens next,

...move on to next item of business.



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Pulling the Meeting Back to the agenda!

- **Bring the conversation back to the issue at hand:**
 - “I understand this is important, but the issue at hand right now is...”,
 - “We have a lot of important work to get through today, let’s work to stay on topic, and get through this.”
- **Work to make sure all opinions are heard, not just repeated**
 - “we have heard the same sentiments a few times now, is there anything new to contribute to the conversation?”



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Future Business

- Any questions which required further investigation,
- Business which wasn’t concluded during the meeting,
- Tabled motions,
- Subsequent readings of policies,
- Regularly scheduled items,
- Other items the board or Superintendent feel needs to be addressed,



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Was your agenda was used and generally followed.



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Did members do their homework before the meeting and came prepared for discussion?



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Did the board president clarify or explain each agenda item?



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Did all board members come on time and stayed to the end.



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Were speaking privileges granted through recognition by the chair?



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Discussion was focused on the issues outlined by the agenda.



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