Board Meeting Efficiencies

May 15, 2021

Board Meeting Trends

Board meetings during the pandemic became more frequent and longer than usual.

There was/is increased participation because of the on-line option.

Due to the complexity of the issues facing the District, the presentations, Trustee questions and comments and public comments, Board meetings extended hours after the Board policy ending time of 9:30.

Important decisions were made at late hours of the night or early hours in the morning.

Trustees, Staff and Parents were/are fatigued.

Immediate Efficiencies for Board Meetings

Agenda items can be slated for a specified period of time.

Staff will work to limit their presentations to 20 minutes.

Trustees can submit questions on presentations prior to the meeting so that staff can include the responses in the presentation.

Trustees can also target their comments following the presentation.

Public Comment options follow…

Public Comment – Board Policy 9323 (from CSBA – Gamut Online)

5.   A person wishing to be heard by the Board shall first be recognized by the president and shall then proceed to comment as briefly as the subject permits.

Individual speakers shall be allowed three minutes to address the Board on each agenda or nonagenda item. The Board shall limit the total time for public input on each item to 20 minutes. With Board consent, the Board president may increase or decrease the time allowed for public presentation, depending on the topic and the number of persons wishing to be heard. The president may take a poll of speakers for or against a particular issue and may ask that additional persons speak only if they have something new to add.

In order to ensure that non-English speakers receive the same opportunity to directly address the Board, any member of the public who utilizes a translator shall be provided at least twice the allotted time to address the Board, unless simultaneous translation equipment is used to allow the Board to hear the translated public testimony simultaneously. (Government Code 54954.3)

Examples of Implementation - Board Policy 9323

The Board President announces the 3 minutes/20 minute max at the beginning of Public Comment. She/he would encourage people who had the same point of view to ask 1-2 people to speak on their behalf, indicating that they were representing others. The Board President gives a 5 minute warning prior to the 20 minute time limit.

Another example…"The president may also ask members of the public with the same viewpoint to select a few individuals to address the Board on behalf of that viewpoint."

Examples of Implementation - Board Policy 9323, continued

Another District allowed both emailed and live comments stating that "emailed comments would be read during the open session portion of the meeting as long as there is time."

A City website stated that if there are more than three (3) speakers to a non-agenda topic, those speakers would be taken at the end of the meeting.

Examples of Collection Options for Public Comment

Some Districts Collect Public Comment Requests Prior to the Meeting - Not During the Meeting

In these cases, the Public utilizes a google form to indicate the Non-Agenda Topic or Board Agenda Item that they would like to address. The form is live at a certain time of the week and then closes at a set time prior to the meeting. Individuals are called on when the item is up on the agenda.

Example: "If you wish to make a comment about an agenda item or during the public comments section at the beginning of the agenda, please send an email to X with your name, email address, and your zoom name (if different) and the item under which you would like to comment. The Board president will call on you. Please note that comments are limited to three minutes. The Board President may increase or decrease the time allowed for public presentation, depending upon the topic and number of persons wishing to be heard."

Other Opportunities for Communication with the Public

Ask the Public to submit thoughts in writing through email to a common Board of Trustees' email address.

Hold Coffee Chats with the Superintendent and Board President.

Hold presentations on topics of interest with staff.

Recommendations

Be aware of the current Board Policy 9323 and review implementation options, collection options and other opportunities for communication with the public.

Consider:
Time limit on Presentations from Staff
Time limit on Board Questions
Time limit on Board Comments
Registration for public comments and determine how to incorporate live comments
Written Submissions via a Form
- Made part of the official record, but not necessarily read aloud during board meetings

Review options with the new Superintendent to determine next steps.

Discussion