

## The School Board of Gadsden County

### Bylaws & Policies

Unless a specific policy has been amended and the date of the policy was revised is noted at the bottom of that policy, the bylaws and policies of The School Board of Gadsden County were adopted on June 25, 2013, and were in effect beginning June 26, 2013.

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#### 0160 - MEETINGS

##### 0161 **Parliamentary Authority**

The parliamentary authority governing the School Board shall be the most recent edition of Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, except as otherwise provided by special Board rules and regulations and/or statutes.

The Board attorney shall serve as parliamentarian at all Board meetings and shall advise the Board Chair regarding parliamentary procedure.

##### 0162 **Quorum**

Three (3) members (for five (5) member boards) present at a meeting shall constitute a quorum, and no business shall be conducted in the absence of a quorum.

F.S. 1001.37(4)

##### 0163 **Presiding Officer**

The Chairman shall preside at all meetings of the School Board. In the absence, disability, or disqualification of the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman shall act instead; if neither person is available, any member shall be designated by a majority of those present to preside. The act of any person so designated shall be legal and binding.

##### 0164 **Notice of Meetings**

Pursuant to State law, the School Board shall give notice of public meetings, hearings, and workshops in the following ways:

- A. by publication in a newspaper of general circulation;
- B. by posting on the District's website not less than seven (7) days before the public meeting, hearing, or workshop;
- C. by mail to all persons who have made requests for advance notice

of the Board's proceedings, and to organizations representing persons affected by any proposed policy; and

- D. by posting in appropriate places so that particular classes of persons to whom an intended action is directed may be notified.

The notice posted shall include a general statement of the general subject matter to be considered.

Notice of special meetings shall be made in a newspaper or newspapers of general circulation in the county sufficiently in advance of the meeting to allow the public to attend. Such notice shall contain the date, time, place, and purpose of the meeting.

F.S. 120.525, 120.81, 1001.372

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## **Meetings**

The School Board shall hold at least one (1) regular meeting each month and may call special meetings as needed. The sessions will be held in any appropriate public place in the county, provided due public notice is given.

F.S. 1001.372

In accordance with law, all meetings at which official acts are to be taken are declared to be open public meetings, and no resolution, rule, policy, regulation, or formal action shall be considered binding except as taken or made at such a meeting. All meetings of the Board shall be open to the public, except as provided by Florida statute, and the order of business of any regular meetings shall include an opportunity for the public to address the Board.

F.S. 447

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## **Agendas**

The Superintendent shall establish the agenda for School Board meetings in consultation with the Board Chairman. Individual members of the Board may place items for discussion on an agenda by advising the Superintendent of their desire to do so. The Superintendent shall establish reasonable procedures and deadlines for the receipt of requests to place items of business on the agenda and requests to make a presentation in the public discussion period. The agenda for Board meetings, hearings, and workshops shall be prepared in time to ensure that a copy of the agenda may be received at least seven (7) days before the event by any reasonable cost of the copy. After the agenda has been made available, change shall be only for good cause, as determined by the person designated to preside, and stated in the record.

- A. The agenda of the regular monthly meeting or special meetings shall be accompanied by descriptive materials from the

Superintendent of information relating to the District with such recommendations as s/he shall make.

- B. The agenda for each regular meeting shall be mailed or delivered to each Board member so as to provide proper time for the member to study the agenda. Generally, the agenda should be mailed no later than seven (7) days prior to the meeting, or delivered so as to provide time for the study of the agenda by the member. The agenda for a special meeting shall be delivered at least twenty-four (24) hours before the meeting, consistent with provisions calling for special meetings.
- C. The Board shall transact business according to the agenda prepared by the Superintendent and submitted to all Board members in advance of the meeting. The order of business may be altered and items added at any meeting by a majority vote of the members present.

**D. Consent Agenda**

The Board shall use a consent agenda to keep routine matters within a reasonable time frame.

A member of the Board may request any item be removed from the consent agenda and defer it for a specific action and more discussion. No vote of the Board will be required to remove an item from the consent agenda. A single member's request shall cause it to be relocated as an action item eligible for discussion. Any item on the consent agenda may be removed and discussed as a nonaction item or be deferred for further study and discussion at a subsequent Board meeting if the Superintendent or any Board member thinks the item requires further discussion.

- E. The agenda for special meetings called by the Superintendent, or by the Superintendent on request of the Board Chairman, or on the request of a majority of the Board members, shall be prepared upon the calling of the meeting but not less than forty-eight (48) hours prior to such a meeting. The order of business at special meetings of the Board shall be established by the Board.

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**Regular Meetings**

Regular meetings of the School Board shall be public and held at least once each month except as shall be authorized by the Board.

In accordance with law, regular meetings shall be held at the time fixed at the annual organizational meeting. Such notification shall be made immediately after the annual organization meeting at which the Board fixes regular meeting dates and times. Should the date of a regular meeting fall on a holiday, the Board may change the meeting date at any prior meeting. Every Board member shall be notified of the change by letter or by distribution of the Board minutes which carry a record of the change. The Superintendent shall be responsible for public notice of changed meetings.

0165.3

**Special Meetings****A. Consent Agenda**

Special meetings shall be called by the Chairman, or the Superintendent or by three (3) members of the School Board by serving a written notice of the time, place, and purpose of such meeting upon each Board member at least two (2) days in advance of the meeting.

B. The agenda as presented shall be followed unless altered by the presiding officer or a majority of those present and voting.

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**Recess**

The School Board may at any time move for a recess or intermission in the day's proceedings. If a recess is provided for in the agenda, the Chair, when the time arrives, announces the fact and says the assembly stands in recess, to the specified hour. When the Board meets at the time that the recess is to conclude, the Chair calls the assembly to order and the business proceeds as a continuation of the previous session. (Reference: Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised)

0165.5

**Adjourn**

The School Board may, at any time during a meeting, adjourn the meeting to a specified date and time. Before accepting a motion to adjourn, the Chair should be sure that no important matters have been overlooked. If there are announcements to be made they should be attended to before adjournment.

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**Executive Session**

The School Board reserves the right to meet privately in executive session for those issues authorized by law.

0166.1

**Work Session**

Work session may be called by the Chairman of the School Board, the Superintendent, or a majority of Board members solely for the purpose of exploring matters that constitute the business of the school system. Each Board member shall be formally notified of such work session through the office of the Superintendent sufficiently in advance of the session to enable all members to attend. Notification shall include the general subject areas for discussion.

A. The Superintendent, acting as secretary, shall take minutes of all matters discussed during work sessions to be read and approved at the next regular or special meeting.

- B. Work sessions are solely for the purpose of communicating information and general discussion. The Board shall take no formal action in a work session nor shall they agree to any decisions with respect to issues that may be brought forward at a regular or special Board meeting.

F.S. 1001.41

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### **Voting**

All motions shall require for adoption a majority vote of those present and voting, except as provided by statute, these bylaws, or parliamentary authority. Upon the demand of any member of the School Board, the vote shall be recorded by roll call.

Abstentions shall only be permitted as authorized by law.

All actions requiring a vote can be conducted by voice vote or show of hands, unless a roll-call vote is requested or required. Each vote and abstention shall be recorded. Proxy voting is prohibited.

F.S. 286.012

0167.1

### **Use of Electronic Mail**

Since E-mail is a form of communication that could conflict with the Sunshine Law, it will be used only for the purposes of communicating:

- A. messages between School Board members or between a Board member and employee(s) which do not involve deliberating or rendering a decision on matters pending before the Board;
- B. possible agenda items between the Superintendent and the Board Chairman;
- C. times, dates, and places of regular or special Board meetings;
- D. a Board meeting agenda or public record information concerning items on the agenda;
- E. requests for public record information from a member of the administration, school staff, or community pertaining to District operations;
- F. responses to questions posed by members of the public, administrators, or school staff.

Under no circumstances shall Board members use E-mail to discuss among themselves Board business that is only to be discussed in an open meeting of the Board, is part of an executive session, or could be considered an invasion of privacy if the message were to be monitored by another party.

There should be no expectation of privacy for any messages sent by E-mail. Messages that have been deleted may still be accessible on the hard drive, if the space has not been occupied by other messages. Messages, deleted or otherwise, may be subject to disclosure under the Public Records Act, unless an exemption would apply.

0168

## **Minutes**

The Superintendent shall act as secretary and shall cause to be kept official minutes of all its meetings showing the time and place, the members present, the subjects considered, a summary of the deliberations sufficient enough for the public to understand the basis for the School Board's actions, the actions taken, the vote of each member on roll-call votes, and any other information required to be shown in the minutes by law, which shall be available to the public.

The minutes of Board meetings shall be considered at the next regular meeting where they shall be read (unless waived by law), corrected, and approved. The approved minutes shall be signed by the Superintendent and the Chairman.

Tape recordings shall be made of each meeting of the Board as an administrative aid and shall be preserved as public documents of the Board as required by State statute. The tape recordings shall also be referred to in the written minutes.

The approved minutes shall be filed in the Board office in a prescribed minutes book as a permanent record of official Board proceedings.

F.S. 1001.42

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## **Public Participation at Board Meetings**

The School Board recognizes the value to school governance of public comment on educational issues and the importance of allowing members of the public to express themselves on school matters of community interest.

In order to permit the fair and orderly expression of such comment, the Board may provide a period for public participation at those public meetings of the Board during which action may be taken and publish rules to govern such participation in Board meetings.

The presiding officer of each Board meeting at which public participation is permitted shall administer the rules of the Board for its conduct.

The presiding officer shall be guided by the following rules:

- A. Attendees must register their intention to participate in the public portion of the meeting upon their arrival at the meeting.
- B. Participants must be recognized by the presiding officer and will be requested to preface their comments by an announcement of their name, address, and group affiliation, if and when appropriate.
- C. Each statement made by a participant may be limited to three (3) minutes duration, unless extended by the presiding officer. Persons will be recognized in the order in which the requests were received.
- D. All statements shall be directed to the presiding officer; no person may address or question Board members individually. Staff members shall not be expected to answer questions from the audience unless called upon by the Board Chairman or the Superintendent.
- E. A copy of the official tape or video recordings of the Board meeting(s) will be provided upon request and payment of a fee established in Policy [8310](#) - Public Records.
- F. The presiding officer may:
  - 1. interrupt, warn, or terminate a participant's statement when the statement is too lengthy, personally directed, abusive, obscene, or irrelevant;
  - 2. request any individual to leave the meeting when that person does not observe reasonable decorum;
  - 3. request the assistance of law enforcement officers in the removal of a disorderly person when that person's conduct interferes with the orderly progress of the meeting;
  - 4. call for a recess or an adjournment to another time when the lack of public decorum so interferes with the orderly conduct of the meeting as to warrant such action.

The portion of the meeting during which the participation of the public is invited may be limited to thirty (30) minutes, unless extended by a vote of the Board, except that all speakers who signed up to speak and who were outside of the thirty (30) minutes time limit may address the Board at the end of the meeting. In addition, up to thirty (30) minutes of public discussion may be allowed for each agenda action item.

No Board action shall be taken on requests made during public discussion unless the Board declares the matter to be an emergency in accordance with current law. Any other requests that the Board chooses to take action

on shall be placed on an agenda for a subsequent meeting.

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