



## FIVE FAST FACTS

# Tips on running successful board meetings

Board meetings are the only opportunity for board members and district administrators to discuss issues of importance to the district as one body. It's important that meetings are conducted in a way that encourages progress and offers all board members an opportunity to contribute.



### **1. Start with a good agenda, one all board members have seen ahead of time and had an opportunity to review.**

District policies about board meeting agendas vary. However, in many districts, the superintendent and treasurer work together to draft the board meeting agenda. The draft is normally shared with the board president, who is able to ask questions and amend agenda items. The amended draft may be shared with other board members by the board president. Once all board members have seen the draft agenda, a final version (with attachments as needed) is sent to board members. The agenda also is distributed to the media and members of the community.

### **2. Start on time and stay on task.**

District administrators, staff and others asked to attend board meetings should understand when meetings begin and that they will always begin on time. Parliamentary procedure can help as board members move through the agenda. The treasurer's ability to take clear and concise minutes also can assist if questions arise about what was said or agreed to. Public participation should be kept to an announced time limit (often stated in board policy). Certain situations and topics will cause meetings to go much longer than normal. This is to be expected, but should be the exception rather than the rule.

# FAST FIVE FACTS — TIPS ON RUNNING SUCCESSFUL BOARD MEETINGS

## RESOURCES

OSBA book: *Boardmanship*  
[www.ohioschoolboards.org/node/3311](http://www.ohioschoolboards.org/node/3311)

### 3. Consider using a consent agenda.

A consent agenda allows the board to consider multiple “like” items at one time, or to approve or disapprove such items with one vote instead of multiple ones. The consent agenda should not be used to consider disparate items, and any board member may ask that any individual item contained within a consent agenda be removed for separate consideration.

### 4. Ensure public participation is managed respectfully and professionally.

Many board meetings get out of hand during the public participation section of the meeting. Ohio public school districts are not obligated to offer public participation. However, the majority of boards believe this is an important way to encourage community engagement. The board president should begin the session by stating the guidelines for public participation and guests should be offered a copy of the policy related to this topic when entering the meeting.

### 5. Organize the meeting to minimize disruption and delay.

Meeting events that include large numbers of guests — such as student reports or performances, or reports on teacher or staff accomplishments — or involve lengthy discussion and debate should be placed on the agenda in such a way that the change from one to the other goes smoothly. Consider having events that include students and families before a brief recess, so that they can leave following this item if they would like. Issues that will require lengthy debate and discussion should be tackled at the beginning of the meeting, when board members are fresh, and should be limited in number during a single meeting, if possible.



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*OSBA leads the way to educational excellence by serving Ohio's public school board members and the diverse districts they represent through superior service, unwavering advocacy and creative solutions.*

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