



Policy Number	006.1
Title	Attendance at Meetings Via Electronic Communications
Adopted	2/28/1995
Revised	8/18/2020
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Attendance at Meetings Via Electronic Communications

Authority

The Board recognizes that in-person attendance is essential to effective governance and public accountability. Board members are expected to attend all meetings in person. Virtual participation shall be permitted only in extraordinary circumstances that prevent physical attendance, including illness, family emergency, military obligations, or other circumstances approved by the Board President. Virtual attendance shall not become a substitute for regular in-person participation.

~~The Board recognizes that factors such as illness, travel, schedule conflicts, weather conditions and other emergency situations can make impossible the physical presence of a school director or other necessary participants at a Board meeting and that electronic communications can enable a school director or other necessary participants to participate in a meeting electronically from a remote location.~~

A school director shall be able to attend a Board meeting, and participate in Board deliberations and voting, through electronic communications, but only under extraordinary circumstances. The Board President may permit other necessary participants to participate in meetings via electronic communications as the Board President deems appropriate.^[1]

The Board President shall have the express authority to approve or deny a school director's request to attend via electronic communications due to weather emergencies, hazardous travel conditions, or other personal emergencies. To ensure consistency and commitment to public service, a school director shall be limited to attending no more than three (3) regular or special public Board meetings via electronic communication per calendar year, unless a majority of the physically present Board votes to waive this limit due to an extended medical or hardship exception. Any member participating remotely shall publicly state the reason for remote attendance, which shall be reflected in the meeting minutes.

The Board authorizes the administration to provide the equipment and facilities required to implement this Board procedure.

Guidelines

A school director who attends a meeting through electronic communications shall be considered present only if the school director can hear everything said at the meeting and all those attending the meeting can hear everything said by that school director and other participants addressing the Board. If the Board President determines either condition is not occurring, the Board President shall terminate the school director's attendance through electronic communications.

If a physical quorum is lost at any point during the meeting, all official Board voting must cease immediately.

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A majority of school directors shall be physically present at a Board meeting when a school director attends through electronic communications.

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To attend a Board meeting through electronic communications, a school director shall comply with the following:

1. Submit such request to the Board President and the Board Secretary at least three (3) days prior to the meeting, except in the case of sudden illness or a sudden weather emergency, where notice must be given as soon as practicable. Request for Zoom link will only be sent out at the direction of the board secretary.
2. Ensure that the remote location is quiet and free from background noise and interruptions.
3. Participate in the entire Board meeting. If a school director must disconnect before adjournment, they must announce their departure for the official record.
4. Utilize two-way communication (camera enabled) for the duration of the meeting to verify the school director's active participation and identity during all public deliberations and roll-call votes.

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3. ~~Participate in the entire Board meeting.~~

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Emergency Conditions In the event that the county, state or federal public health authorities, the Governor, or any similar authority with appropriate jurisdiction declares an emergency condition that prevents or discourages public gatherings due to a public health or safety concern, the

Board shall be authorized to conduct meetings primarily or entirely via electronic communications to enable all school directors and other necessary participants to fully participate in the conduct of official Board business through electronic communications. ^[2]

Meetings held primarily or entirely via electronic communications shall be conducted in a manner that assures compliance with the public access and public comment requirements of the Sunshine Act. All rules normally applicable to in-person meetings of the Board shall be observed in meetings held primarily or entirely via electronic means to the extent practicable and appropriate to the nature and features of the technology used.^[3] ^[4]

The requirement for school directors to submit a request to participate in meetings through electronic communications shall be waived during such emergency conditions.

The Board authorizes the administration to utilize available technical resources to permit the public to attend and submit public comment during open meetings via electronic communications, in accordance with law and Board procedures and policy.^[3] ^[4]

Footnotes

[1] 24 P.S. 407 View source ↗

[2] Pol. 805 Open policy 📄
Policy Reference

[3] 65 Pa. C.S.A. 701 et seq View source ↗

[4] 65 Pa. C.S.A. 701 et seq Open policy 📄
Policy Reference

Legal References

[3] 24 P.S. 407
[4] 65 Pa. C.S.A. 701 et seq