



# Parliamentary Procedure & School Board Elections

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## Questions?



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## Parliamentary Procedure

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### What is Parliamentary Procedure?

- Think of parliamentary procedure as the “Rules of the Road” for board meetings.
- Parliamentary procedure is an organized system that allows a group of people to come together and make a decision
- Just like the rules of driving, parliamentary procedure has guidelines to help you get from Point A to Point B.



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### Foundational Concepts

- **One Thing at a Time** – Only one main motion is allowed for discussion at a time, but it can be put aside in certain circumstances.
- **One Person at a Time** – Only one person may talk at a time.
- **Enough People to Decide** – There must be a certain minimum number of members (a quorum) which must be present to make a decision.

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- **Everyone is Equal** – All voting members have equal rights. The majority rules, but the minority has the right to be heard and debate their points.
- **Silence = Consent** – If a member chooses to abstain from voting, that member is giving his/her consent to the decision made by the group.

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### Common Mistakes



- Surprises are allowed to happen.
- Forget to demand proper respect and protocol by all board members, staff, and guests.
- Forget that board member conduct sends messages to your community.
- Forget that the board only has power as a collective group.
- Misunderstanding what the chair's role is and is not.

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### Parliamentary Procedure Presiding Secrets

The role of the chair is to facilitate (make easier) the meeting, not control the meeting.

As the chair, **DO NOT** take the "dictator approach."

Examples of a dictatorial manner of running a meeting include:

- The chair closes debate,
- The chair does not call on someone if he/she does not want to do so, and/or
- The chair follows his/her own rules and not Robert's Rules.

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As the chair, **DO** approach the meeting with the mindset that it is the member's meeting. In selecting a chair, the board should look for the following qualities:



**Neutrality:** The chair should not show partiality. If the presiding officer cannot stay neutral, he/she should "pass the gavel."

**Credibility:** The chair must establish credibility by taking actions that board members perceive as fair and honest.

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**Judgement:** The chair should always make the correct judgement calls, especially during a vote.

**Fairness:** The chair should always be sure that others perceive his/her actions as fair and must use consistency in addressing each board member.

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**Parliamentary Procedure Presiding Skills**

- **Communications:** Listening and observing are critical skills. A savvy chair knows the importance of listening to the members in order to help focus the group on the matter at hand.
- **Facilitation:** The chair’s role is not to control the meeting, but to make it easier. Board meetings are about what the board, and not individual members, wants to accomplish. Reducing extraneous debate and recognizing speakers are two ways to help in the facilitation of meetings.

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• **Organization:** The agenda is a powerful tool. The chair should be sure the board adheres to the agenda.

• **Rule Following:** Rules are necessary. Establishing and respecting standing rules is always a must.



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The chair should also be able to:

- Set the Tone
- Reduce Confusion
- Reduce Extraneous Debate
- Expedite the Meeting
- Follow the Rules



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### Importance of a Quorum

A quorum is the number of voting members who must be present in order for business to be legally transacted.

The most frequent quorum requirement is a majority of the members. Unless the bylaws specify something different, the quorum is a majority of the members.

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To determine a quorum, count the number of voting members in attendance.



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### What Can You Do Without a Quorum?

In the absence of a quorum, the board is severely limited in the actions it can take. The few permissible actions are as followed:

- Set the time for another meeting
- End the meeting
- Take a short break
- Take measures to obtain a quorum such as trying to find enough members to attend in order to obtain a quorum

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### The Agenda

The agenda is a map, intended to guide the board members through a meeting and should always be followed.

The agenda is predetermined and should be received by the board members prior to the board meeting.

It is meant to:

- Inform members
- Lock in business
- Alert the public of issues
- Should rarely be added to at the meeting



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### Handling a Motion

To make any kind of motion, a person must be a voting member of the board.

The motion process involves six steps:

- A member makes a motion.
- Another member seconds the motion.
- The chair states the question.
- The members debate the motion.
- The members vote.
- The chair announces the results of the vote.

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**Step 1: Making a Motion**

To make a motion, a board member needs to seek recognition from the chair.

It is helpful to have a motion in writing to prevent any confusion over the wording.

A board member should write his/her motion, introduce it, and then pass it to the chair and the secretary for recording in the minutes.

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If the motion is not clearly written, the chair has the option, before the motion is seconded, to clarify the motion.

Once the motion is seconded, it can only be altered by an amendment.

The chair has the same privilege to make motions unless the bylaws state otherwise.

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**Step 2: Seconding the Motion**

Seconding a motion does NOT imply support for that motion.

A second merely implies that the board member wishes to hear the motion discussed.

If no one seconds the motion, the chair states that "the motion fails for lack of a second." The motion dies, and the group then moves on to the next item.

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Some items do not require a motion, such as:

- Nominations
- Parliamentary Inquiry
- Point of Information
- Point of Order
- Recommendation of a Committee Comprised of Two or More Board Members.



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**Step 3: The Chair States the Question**

The chair is responsible for formally placing a motion before the members by stating the motion.

It is important that the chair state the precise wording of the motion before debate begins and again before the vote is taken. Putting a motion in writing makes this job easier.

If the motion has been amended, the chair should clarify by stating the motion as amended.

If during the debate members get off topic, the chair can restate the motion in order to refocus the discussion.

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**Step 4: Members Debate the Motion**

During debate, the chair should encourage members to confine their remarks to the immediately pending question.

The person who makes the motion is entitled to speak first if he/she so desires.

A useful tool for this part of this process is the chair rotating the discussion between those for the motion and those against the motion. This avoids lengthy discussion while also avoiding partiality.

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Remember to keep the discussion focused on the motion, not the people involved.

Once the members are finished discussing the motion, the chair should conclude the debate and move for a vote.



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### Step 5: The Members Vote

Before calling for the vote, the chair should repeat the motion so that everyone understands the issue.

The bylaws of the school board should state the voting procedure.

A negative vote should always be called even if it appears that the motion gained nearly unanimous consent.

Voting by secret ballot is illegal since votes must be recorded in the minutes.

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The chair should announce the vote totals, and those totals should be recorded in the minutes.

All members must vote either yea, nay, or abstain. Silence is consent.



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**Abstention** - an instance of declining to vote for or against a proposal or motion

Because a member cannot be compelled to vote, he/she has the right to abstain.

It is the responsibility of a member to abstain if the issue involves a direct personal interest not common to other members of the organization.

A motion passes if it receives a majority of the votes cast, excluding those who abstain.

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Example: If a motion before a board of five members receives two ayes, one nay, and two abstentions, the motion passes. The vote is counted as a 2-1 vote.



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**Step 6: Announcing the Vote**



The chair should always announce the outcome of the vote.

The announcement should include the outcome of the vote and the number who voted for and against the motion.

This step helps bring closure to the issue.

Once this step is completed, the board is ready to move on to consideration of other issues.

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### Reconsidering a Motion

Sometimes a board discovers information that may result in the need to reconsider action previously taken.

A motion to reconsider allows a board to correct this action.



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Important things to remember about a motion to reconsider:

- The motion can be made only by a member who voted with the prevailing side;
- It has a time limit; it must be taken on the same day of the board meeting;
- The motion can be seconded by anyone in the group; AND
- The motion requires a majority vote.

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### Amendments

If a member of the board proposes an amendment to the main motion, the amendment becomes the immediately pending question and must be resolved prior to continuing debate on the main motion.

Tips for handling amendments:

- Consider only one amendment at a time.
- After an amendment has been adopted, the chair should repeat the main motion as amended.
- Only amend an amendment when necessary.
- An amendment must be involved in the question that is under discussion.

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**Main Motion** – Brings business before the board

- Second needed, is debatable and amendable
- Majority vote
- Only one main motion may be considered at a time.



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**Primary Amendment** – Can change the intent of the main motion

- Second needed, is debatable and amendable
- Majority vote
- Must be germane or related to the main motion

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**Secondary Amendment** – Perfecting the wording of the primary amendment

- Second needed and is debatable
- NOT amendable
- Must be germane or related to the main motion
- Majority vote
- The secondary amendment is dealt with before returning to the primary amendment.

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### Rescinding a Motion

This motion is used to quash or nullify a previously adopted motion.

It is possible to rescind the entire action or to strike out certain parts.

Rescind is not in order when any action has already been taken as a result of the vote, such as any kind of contract when the other party has been notified.



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A motion to rescind must be seconded and requires a two-thirds vote unless notice has been given at a previous meeting, either verbally or in writing. If notice has been given, the motion requires only a majority vote.

Any board member may make a motion to rescind.

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### Delaying Consideration of a Motion

Situations may arise that require extra time to consider the motion or matters of greater urgency come up. Different ways to delay the consideration of a motion include:

- Lay on the Table
- Refer to a Committee
- Postpone
- Postpone to a Definite Time

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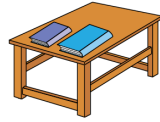
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When matters of great urgency arise, it may be necessary to dispose temporarily of a pending question by introducing a motion to **Lay on the Table**.

**Lay on the Table:**

- Can be applied to any main motion;
- Is not debatable;
- Cannot be amended; AND
- Requires a majority vote.



The chair must call for a vote immediately after identifying the motion.

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Once laid on the table, the motion can be taken up again at any time by a majority of the members.

Any member may make a motion to take an issue from the table.

If the motion lies on the table through the close of the next regular session, it dies.

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If the majority of board members believes that further investigation is necessary on an issue, the board may **Refer to a Committee**.



The Motion:

- Requires a second,
- Is debatable, AND
- Can be amended.

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If an appropriate committee does not exist, the chair may appoint a committee to consider the matter.

The chair should seek consent from the board on the appointment of the committee.

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A motion to **Postpone** has the effect of killing a motion for the duration of the board meeting without forcing members to take a stand on the merits of the pending question.

A motion to **Postpone**:

- Requires a second,
- Is debatable, AND
- Requires a majority vote for adoption



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A motion to postpone, in effect, an indirect way of rejecting a motion.

A motion cannot be postponed further than the next regular meeting.

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Another alternative is to **Postpone to a Definite Time.**

This motion allows the group to dispose of the issue and move to additional business.

However, it also allows the group to take the matter up again at the specified time.

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A motion to **Postpone to a Definite Time:**

- Requires a second,
- Is debatable, AND
- Requires a majority vote for adoption.



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### **Recess**

A recess is a brief intermission taken by the board. It gives the board a moment to pause, move around, and clear their heads.

Rules for a Motion to Recess:

- Needs a second,
- Requires a majority vote, and
- Is amendable.

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### Adjourn

The motion to adjourn is used to close a meeting once the business of the agenda has been concluded.

This motion requires a second and must acquire a majority vote.

The motion to adjourn is neither debatable nor amendable.

Items not addressed when adjournment occurs automatically appear at the following meeting under “unfinished business.”



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### Simplified Chart of Parliamentary Procedures

### Motions Dealing with General Conduct of Meeting

Motion	Debatable	Amendable	Vote Required	Point of Order	No	No	None
Adjourn	No	No	Majority				
Recess	No	Yes	Majority	Parliamentary Inquiry	No	No	None
Close Debate	No	No	2/3				
Postpone Definitely	Yes	Yes	Majority	Appeal from the Decision of the Chair	Yes	No	Majority
Refer to Committee	Yes	Yes	Majority				
Amend the Amendment	Yes	No	Majority	Suspend the Rules	No	No	2/3
Amend or Substitute	Yes	Yes	Majority				
Main Motion	Yes	Yes	Majority	Divide a Motion	No	Yes	Majority
Reconsider the Main Motion	Yes	No	Majority				
Rescind Main Motion	Yes	Yes	Majority (with notice)	Withdraw or Modify a Motion	No	No	Majority

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### Remember:

- Parliamentary Procedure is an organized system that allows a group of people to come together to make a decision.
- It is about helping people run meetings efficiently, effectively, and fairly.
- Parliamentary Procedure is important for a board that wants to make sure it does not violate the rights of its members.
- It is more than a set of rules; it is a procedure for conducting business.

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# School Board Member Elections

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## Are School Board Members Elected or Appointed?

Elections and Term of Office depends on the type of school district:

- County (MS Code 37-5-7)
- Municipal Separate (MS Code 37-7-203)
- Consolidated (MS Code 37-7-207)  
\*May be different if your district has it's own statute.
- Special Municipal Separate (37-7-707)



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## County

- Composed of five (5) members.
- Members are **elected** for a term of six (6) years and from five districts.
- The general election is held on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November preceding the expiration of term of the respective board member.
- Each member shall take office on the first Monday of January following their election.

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### Municipal Separate

- Composed of five (5) members.
- Most members are **appointed** for a term of five (5) years, but so chosen that the term of one member shall expire each year.
- The term of office shall commence on the first Saturday of March.



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### Consolidated

\*Information may be different if your district has its own statute

- Composed of five (5) members.
- Most members are **elected** for a term of five (5) years, but so chosen that the term of one member shall expire each year.
- Members come from five districts.
- The term of office shall commence in January following the general election in November of each year.

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### Special Municipal Separate

- Composed of five (5) members.
- Members are **elected** at regular general elections as vacancies occur for terms of six (6) years each.
- Each member shall take office on the first Monday of January following their election.
- The type of district depends on whether a majority of residents reside within or outside the municipality.

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### How are Vacancies Filled?

Vacancies can and will occur on each type of school board. Depending on how, when, and in what type of school district the vacancy occurs determines how that spot is filled.



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### County

- Vacancies shall be filled by appointment, within 60 days after the vacancy occurs, by the remaining members of the board.
- The appointee shall be selected from the qualified electors of the district in which the vacancy occurs, and shall serve until the first Monday of January succeeding the next general election.
- A member shall then be elected to fulfill the remainder of the unexpired term.

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### Municipal Separate

- Vacancies shall be filled for the unexpired terms by appointment of the governing authorities of the municipality.
- If a board member resigns, prior to the expiration of his/her appointment, the governing authorities of the municipality shall appoint a replacement for the remaining unexpired term of the member resigning.

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**Consolidated**

- All vacancies shall be filled by appointment of the school district trustees, but the person shall serve only until the next general election following such appointment.
- At that time a person shall be elected for the remainder of the unexpired term and shall take office immediately.

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**Countywide Municipal Separate**

- If a vacancy occurs and the next regular school board election is less than one (1) year from the date of the resignation, the school board may take action to appoint an interim board member to fill the vacancy until a duly qualified successor takes office.
- The interim board member shall serve until a successor is elected at the next regularly scheduled school board election.

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**Vacancy Statutes**

- County (MS Code 37-5-19)
- Municipal Separate (MS Code 37-7-203)
- Consolidated (MS Code 37-7-207)
- Countywide Municipal Separate (MS Code 37-7-204)

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