

CLOSED SESSION

The Board of Education is committed to complying with state open meeting laws and modeling transparency in its conduct of Office of Education business. The County Board shall hold a closed session during a regular, special, or emergency meeting only for purposes authorized by law.

Each agenda shall contain a general description of each closed session item to be discussed at the meeting, as required by law and specified below.

The Board shall announce in open meeting the items to be discussed in closed session. In the closed session, the Board may consider only those matters covered in its statement. After the closed session, the Board shall reconvene in open session before adjourning the meeting, and when applicable, shall publicly report closed session actions, the votes or abstentions thereon, and other disclosures specified below that are applicable to the matter being addressed. Such reports may be made in writing or orally at the location announced in the agenda for the closed session.

When an action taken during a closed session involves final approval or adoption of a document such as a contract or settlement agreement, a copy of the document shall be provided to any person present at the conclusion of the closed session who submitted a written request. If the action taken results in one or more substantive amendments, the document shall be made available the next business day or when the necessary retyping is complete. Whenever copies of an approved agreement will not be immediately released due to an amendment, the County Board president shall orally summarize the substance of the amendment for those present at the end of the closed session.

Confidentiality

A County Board member shall not disclose confidential information received in closed session unless the County Board authorizes the disclosure of that information.

The County Board shall not disclose any information that is protected by state or federal law. In addition, no victim or alleged victim of tortious sexual misconduct or child abuse shall be identified in any County Board agenda, notice, announcement, or report required by the Brown Act, unless the identity of the person has previously been publicly disclosed.

Matters Related to Students

The County Board shall meet in closed session to consider the appeal of an expulsion of a student, unless the student submits a written request at least five days before the date of the hearing that the hearing be held in open session. Regardless of whether the expulsion hearing is conducted in open or closed session, the County Board may meet in closed session for the purpose of deliberations.

Agenda items related to student matters shall briefly describe the reason for the closed session, such as "student expulsion appeal hearing," without violating the confidentiality rights of individual students. The student shall not be named on the agenda, but a number may be assigned to the student in order to facilitate record keeping. The agenda shall also state that the Education Code requires closed sessions in these cases in order to prevent the disclosure of confidential student record information.

In taking final action, the County Board shall not release any information in violation of student privacy rights provided in 20 USC 1232g or other applicable laws. In an expulsion appeal, the County Board shall refer to the student number or other identifier and shall not disclose the student's name.

The County Board shall meet in closed session to address any student matter over which it has statutory authority, when the matter may involve disclosure of confidential student information.

Real Property Negotiations

The County Board may meet in closed session with its real property negotiator prior to the purchase, sale, exchange, or lease of real property by or for the County Board or county office of education (COE) in order to grant its negotiator authority regarding the price and terms of payment for the property.

Before holding the closed session, the County Board shall hold an open and public session to identify its negotiator(s), the property under negotiation, and the person(s) with whom the negotiator may negotiate. For purposes of real property transactions, negotiators may include members of the County Board.

Agenda items related to real property negotiations shall specify the negotiator attending the closed session. If circumstances necessitate the absence of a specified negotiator, an agent or designee may participate in place of the absent negotiator as long as the name of the agent or designee is announced at an open session held prior to the closed session. The agenda shall also specify the name of the negotiating parties and the street address of the real property under negotiation. If there is no street address, the agenda item shall specify the parcel number or another unique reference of the property. The agenda

item shall also specify whether instruction to the negotiator will concern price, terms of payment, or both.

When the County Board approves a final agreement concluding real estate negotiations pursuant to Government Code 54956.8, it shall report that approval and the substance of the agreement in open session at the public meeting during which the closed session is held. If final approval rests with the other party to the negotiations, the County Superintendent or designee shall disclose the fact of that approval and the substance of the agreement upon inquiry by any person, as soon as the other party or its agent has informed the COE of its approval.

Pending Litigation

Based on the advice of its legal counsel, the County Board may hold a closed session to confer with or receive advice from its legal counsel regarding pending litigation when discussion of the matter in open session would prejudice the COE's or County Board's position in the litigation. For this purpose, "litigation" means any adjudicatory proceeding, including eminent domain, before a court, administrative body exercising its adjudicatory authority, hearing officer, or arbitrator.

Litigation is considered "pending" in any of the following circumstances:

1. Litigation to which the COE or County Board is a "party" has been initiated formally.
2. A point has been reached where, in the County Board's opinion based on the advice of its legal counsel regarding the "existing facts and circumstances," there is a "significant exposure to litigation" against the County Board or COE, or the County Board is meeting solely to determine whether, based on existing facts or circumstances, a closed session is authorized.

Existing facts and circumstances for these purposes are limited to the following:

- a. Facts and circumstances that might result in litigation against the County Board or COE but which the County Board believes are not yet known to potential plaintiff(s) and which do not need to be disclosed.
- b. Facts and circumstances including, but not limited to, an accident, disaster, incident, or transactional occurrence which might result in litigation against the County Board or COE, which are already known to potential plaintiff(s) and which must be publicly disclosed before the closed session or specified on the agenda.

- c. The receipt of a claim pursuant to the Government Claims Act or a written threat of litigation from a potential plaintiff. The claim or written communication must be available for public inspection.
 - d. A threat of litigation made by a person in an open meeting on a specific matter within the responsibility of the County Board.
 - e. A threat of litigation made by a person outside of an open meeting on a specific matter within the responsibility of the County Board, provided that the COE official or employee receiving knowledge of the threat made a record of the statement before the meeting and the record is available for public inspection. Such record does not need to identify an alleged victim of tortious sexual conduct or anyone making a threat of litigation on the victim's behalf or identify an employee who is the alleged perpetrator of any unlawful or tortious conduct, unless the identity of this person has been publicly disclosed.
3. Based on existing facts and circumstances, the County Board has decided to initiate or is deciding whether to initiate litigation.

Before holding a closed session pursuant to the pending litigation exception, the County Board shall state on the agenda or publicly announce the subdivision of Government Code 54956.9 under which the closed session is being held. If authority is based on Government Code 54956.9(d)(1), the County Board shall either state the title or specifically identify the litigation to be discussed or state that doing so would jeopardize the ability to effectuate service of process upon unserved parties or to conclude existing settlement negotiations to its advantage.

Agenda items related to pending litigation shall be described as a conference with legal counsel regarding either "existing litigation" or "anticipated litigation."

"Existing litigation" items shall identify the name of the case specified by either the claimant's name, names of parties, or case or claim number, unless the County Board states that to identify the case would jeopardize service of process or existing settlement negotiations. (Government Code 54954.5)

"Anticipated litigation" items shall state that there is significant exposure to litigation pursuant to Government Code 54956.9(d)(2) or (3) and shall specify the potential number of cases. When the County Board expects to initiate a suit, items related to anticipated litigation shall state that the discussion relates to the initiation of litigation pursuant to Government Code 54956.9(d)(4) and shall specify the potential number of cases. The agenda or an oral statement before the closed session may be required to provide additional information regarding existing facts and circumstances described in item #2b-e above. (Government Code 54954.5)

Following the closed session, the County Board shall publicly report, as applicable:

1. Approval to legal counsel to defend, appeal or not appeal, or otherwise appear in litigation. This report shall identify the adverse parties, if known, and the substance of the litigation.
2. Approval to legal counsel to initiate or intervene in a lawsuit. This report shall state that directions to initiate or intervene in the action have been given and that the action, defendants, and other details will be disclosed to inquiring parties after the lawsuit is commenced unless doing so would jeopardize the ability to serve process on unserved parties or the ability to conclude existing settlement negotiations to its advantage.
3. Acceptance of a signed offer from the other party or parties which finalizes the settlement of pending litigation. This report shall state the substance of the agreement.

If approval is given to legal counsel to settle pending litigation and if final approval rests with the other party or with the court, the County Board shall report the fact of approval, and the substance of the agreement to persons who inquire once the settlement is final. (Government Code 54957.1)

Review of Student Assessment Instruments

The County Board may meet in closed session to review the contents of any student assessment instrument approved or adopted for the statewide testing system. Before any such meeting, the County Board shall agree by resolution to accept any terms or conditions established by the State Board of Education for this review.

Agenda items related to the review of student assessment instruments shall state that the County Board is reviewing the contents of an assessment instrument approved or adopted for the statewide testing program and that Education Code 60617 authorizes a closed session for this purpose in order to maintain the confidentiality of the assessment under review.

Following the closed session, the County Board shall confirm that the assessment instruments were reviewed. Any actions related to the review shall be taken in open session without revealing any proprietary or confidential information and shall be a matter of public record.

Other Matters for Closed Session

When appropriate, the County Board may also hold a closed session to discuss any of the following:

1. Security Matters

The County Board may meet in closed session with the Governor, Attorney General, district attorney, legal counsel, sheriff or chief of police, or their respective deputies, or a security consultant or a security operations manager, on matters posing a threat to the security of public buildings; to the security of essential public services, including water, drinking water, wastewater treatment, natural gas service, and electric service; or to the public's right of access to public services or public facilities. Such discussions may be held in closed session during an emergency meeting called pursuant to Government Code 54956.5 if agreed to by a two-thirds vote of the County Board members present, or, if less than two-thirds of the members are present, by a unanimous vote of the members present.

Agenda items related to these security matters shall specify the name of the law enforcement agency and the title of the officer, or name of applicable agency representative and title, with whom the County Board will consult.

2. Tactical Response Plan

The County Board may meet in closed session to consult with law enforcement officials on the development of a plan for tactical responses to criminal incidents and to approve the plan. Following the closed session, the County Board shall report any action taken to approve the plan, but need not disclose the COE's plan for tactical responses.

3. Joint Powers Agency Issues

The County Board may meet in closed session to discuss a claim for the payment of tort liability losses, public liability losses, or workers' compensation liability incurred by a joint powers agency (JPA) formed for the purpose of insurance pooling or self-insurance authority of which the COE is a member.

Closed session agenda items related to liability claims shall specify the claimant's name and the name of the agency against which the claim is made.

When the board of the JPA has so authorized and upon advice of legal counsel, the County Board may also meet in closed session in order to receive, discuss, and take action concerning information obtained in a closed session of the JPA that has direct financial or liability implications for the COE.

Closed session agenda items related to conferences involving a JPA shall specify the name of the JPA, the closed session description used by the JPA, and the name of the County Board member representing the County Board on the JPA board. Additional information listing the names of agencies or titles of

representatives attending the closed session as consultants or other representatives shall also be included. (Government Code 54954.5)

The County Board shall report the disposition of joint powers agency or self-insurance claims, including the name of the claimant(s), the name of the agency claimed against, the substance of the claim, and the monetary settlement agreed upon by the claimant.

4. Review of Audit Report from California State Auditor's Office

Upon receipt of a confidential final draft audit report from the California State Auditor's Office, the County Board may meet in closed session to discuss its response to that report. After public release of the report from the California State Auditor's Office, any County Board meeting to discuss the report must be conducted in open session, unless exempted from that requirement by some other provision of law.

Closed session agenda items related to an audit by the California State Auditor's Office shall state "Audit by California State Auditor's Office."

Following the closed session, the County Board shall publicly confirm that the report was reviewed and a response was prepared.

Legal Reference:

EDUCATION CODE

1040 Duties and responsibilities; county boards of education

1042 County boards; authority

1700 County school service fund

1703 Coordination services

1730 Supervision of instruction

1740 Supervision of attendance

1750 Supervision of health

1760 Provision of guidance services

32281 School safety plans

35145 Public meetings

35146 Closed session for student suspension or disciplinary action

48912 Governing board suspension of student

48918 Rules governing expulsion procedures; hearings and notice

49073-49079 Privacy of student records

60617 Closed session (re review of contents of statewide assessment)

GOVERNMENT CODE

815-818.9 California Government Claims Act

3540-3549.3 Educational Employment Relations Act

6252-6270 California Public Records Act

54950-54963 The Ralph M. Brown Act

CALIFORNIA CONSTITUTION

Article 1, Section 3 Public right to access information

UNITED STATES CODE, TITLE 20

1232g Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act

CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS, TITLE 34

99.1-99.8 Family Educational Rights and Privacy

COURT DECISIONS

Moreno v. City of King, (2005) 127 Cal.App.4th 17

Morrison v. Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles Board of Commissioners, (2003) 107 Cal.App.4th 860

Rim of the World Unified School District v. San Bernardino County Superior Court, (2002) 104 Cal.App.4th 1393

Bell v. Vista Unified School District, (2000) 82 Cal.App. 4th 672

Kleitman v. Superior Court of Santa Clara County, (1999) 87 Cal Rptr. 2d

Furtado v. Sierra Community College District, (1998) 68 Cal.App. 4th 876

Gillespie v. San Francisco Public Library Commission, (1998) 67 Cal.App.4th 1165

Roberts v. City of Palmdale, (1993) 5 Cal. 4th 363

Sacramento Newspaper Guild v. Sacramento County Board of Supervisors, (1968) 263 Cal.App. 2d 41

ATTORNEY GENERAL OPINIONS

94 Ops.Cal.Atty.Gen. 82 (2011)

89 Ops.Cal.Atty.Gen. 110 (2006)

86 Ops.Cal.Atty.Gen. 210 (2003)

85 Ops.Cal.Atty.Gen. 77 (2002)

78 Ops.Cal.Atty.Gen. 218 (1995)

59 Ops.Cal.Atty.Gen. 532 (1976)