



**MAKING BOARD
MEETINGS MORE
INTERESTING AND
EFFECTIVE**

NJHSA LAY AFFINITY GROUP

KEY ELEMENTS

- Physical/Technical Necessities
- Advance Preparation/Agenda Building
- Meeting Conduct
- Post Meeting



PHYSICAL/TECHNICAL ARRANGEMENTS

LOCATION, PHYSICAL SPACE AND WORKING TECHNOLOGY MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE



VENUE SELECTION

- Location should be easily accessible to all Board members
- Attendees should feel comfortable and secure at the meeting location
- Essential technology, including screen/projectors, speaker/video conference tools must be available
- Adequate support facilities (e.g. rest rooms, refreshment prep, "break-out" rooms) should be available
- Absence of distractions created by other activities in building or space

CALENDAR/ TIME SCHEDULE

- Date, time and location selection should maximize in-person attendance
- Periodically poll Board members on satisfaction with schedule and location
- Identify the date, time and location of meetings well in advance (for entire fiscal/calendar year if possible)
- Consider special venue, date and time for at least one meeting per year, perhaps coupled with social or development event

MEETING ROOM PLANNING

- Assure that table(s) and chairs are large and comfortable enough for working meeting
- Seating arrangement should allow for everyone to see and hear the rest of the group (e.g., square or circle)
- Be mindful any need for privacy/confidentiality
- If computers/tablets are routinely used by board members, assure access to outlets for chargers, availability of wi-fi with password info easily available
- All essential technology (e.g., tele/video conference service, projectors) should be set up and carefully tested in advance with technically competent person is present to immediately assist



ADVANCE PREPARATIONS

CAREFUL ADVANCE PREPARATION DELIVERS EFFECTIVE MEETING OUTCOMES



AGENDA ESSENTIALS

- Timed, written agendas should be distributed well in advance
- Agenda should clearly specify meeting start and end times, and meeting should start and end on time
- Every agenda item should have time and individual assigned to it
- Accompany agenda distribution with:
 - Financial statements, “dashboard”
 - Other documents needed to inform agenda discussions
 - Committee reports that don't require meeting discussion
 - Draft resolutions for complex approval issues

BUILDING AN EFFECTIVE AGENDA

- Use consent agenda to quickly dispose of routine items without delay or discussion
- Begin meetings with interesting/fun item relating to the mission (e.g., mini “lesson” by a teacher; explanation of how counseling works, report by staff member on what they do)
- Rely primarily on written committee reports distributed in advance; discussion at meeting limited to key issues and circumstances where action/feedback is required
- Meeting centerpiece should be robust discussion around key strategic, organizational decision based on advance preparation
- Specify times allotted to each item and, where appropriate, outcome being sought (e.g., approval of budget or contract)
- Include executive session on every agenda

OTHER ADVANCE PLANNING MATTERS

- Prepare name “tent cards” for the table and use for every meeting, even when you believe “everyone” knows each other
- Arrange for refreshments – at a minimum water, coffee, soft drinks and perhaps some kind of snack(s)
- Locate meeting chair and CEO centrally and near any conference microphones; essential that they be seen and heard, and that the chair can also see and hear everyone around the table
- Invitees – generally limit meetings to Board members, CEO/ED; limit staff, guest attendance



CONDUCTING THE MEETING

WELL-RUN MEETINGS ARE MORE ENGAGING AND EFFECTIVE



CHAIR DISCIPLINE

- Board “owns” its agenda, but the chair needs to maintain overall control of the meeting
- Expect that individuals must be recognized before speaking
- Tamp down “side bar” discussions promptly and regularly
- Avoid or limit duplicative comments
- Draw out “quiet” attendees; don’t permit “alphas” to dominate the discussion
- Manage phone/video conference participants – use mute and require recognition
- Defer off topic comments
- Be mindful of agenda timing; adjust where necessary but willingly defer topics to future meetings when clearly not ready for immediate consensus action
- Extend time only when necessary and productive

MEETING CONDUCT

- Bring issues when ripe for large group discussion; do not expect to function as a committee of the whole
- Focus should be strategic, “big picture” – don’t bog down in execution details
- For meetings longer than two hours, allow for mid-session break
- Adopt organization rules of meeting conduct (e.g., use of cell phones, laptops and computers, respectful constructive comments addressed to the chair)
- Anticipate questions that will occur and be ready with clear, concise answers
- Repeat questions where not picked up by conference mikes
- Prepare and use dashboards and other visual aids, and have printed or electronic copies available in advance or at start of meeting



POST MEETING

MEETING WORK ISN'T DONE AT ADJOURNMENT



POST MEETING

- Summarize key follow-up items at end of meeting to be sure they make it into the minutes
- Promptly prepare written well organized minutes that delineate attendees, matters discussed (in summary fashion), votes taken/resolutions approved, follow-up items
- Provide email updates to Board of post-meeting progress or follow-up where appropriate
- Chair extend thanks to all participants, specific focus on special efforts made by individuals
- Answer questions that could not be answered at the meeting
- Solicit feedback for future improvements



TIME FOR DISCUSSION/QUESTIONS

