**Introduction**

*The following script is sample language to be used by the President to set expectations at the start of a Board meeting and to provide guidance for public comment for items that are on and not on the agenda, and for difficult situations that might come up during the meeting.*

* *Blue italic text:* Not intended to be read but, rather, is for the benefit of the Board President or another Board member who is acting as Chair of the meeting
* *Orange italic text:* Suggested actions that may be taken by the Chair in response to a disturbance.
* ***Highlighted bold italic text:*** Provides the time for use of the sample language. Boards should adjust as necessary to meet the local requirements in their Bylaws and Governance Handbook but should consult with legal counsel if the proposed changes may limit the free speech rights of meeting participants.

**Opening of the Meeting**

Greetings, everyone and thank you for being here. Before we get started, I would like to say that the Board appreciates and supports stakeholder input at our meetings. Engagement by members of the public in civic matters is a cornerstone of our democracy. Everyone should have a chance to express their opinions within the guidelines the Board has established for its meetings so that we are able to conduct the meeting effectively and efficiently.

During the meeting, there will be time for the public to comment on matters not on the agenda. In addition, members of the public may comment on specific agenda items after I, as Board Chair, ask for public comment on an item. Until it is your turn to speak, or if you are here just to observe the meeting, please refrain from any behavior that prevents others from participating in the meeting or that disrupts the Board’s ability to conduct the business of the board. This includes any conduct that prevents members of the board, district staff, or the person making public comment from speaking.

We also ask that when you are called upon, you address only the Board. While we assume that members of the public intend to participate in the meeting in a civil manner and while legitimate criticism of the Board is protected speech, we will not tolerate any threats of violence made to Board members, staff, or to other members of the public. In the event of a threat of violence, the individual will be removed from the room, whenever possible, and will be referred to law enforcement. In the event that the meeting is disrupted in a manner that prevents the Board from proceeding with the agenda items for the meeting, we may choose to recess the meeting until order is restored. If order cannot be restored after a recess, we may choose to clear the room, move the meeting to a location where it will no longer be disrupted, or adjourn the meeting.

**Opening Script to Hear Public Comments on Items Not on the Agenda**

We have reached the portion of our meeting set aside for comments from the public about matters not on the agenda but within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Board. Under Board Bylaw 9323, comments are limited to <?> minutes, unless changed by the Board. *[Bylaw 9323 is the number of CSBA’s sample bylaw, “Meeting Conduct”. Please check your Policy Manual to make sure it is the same.]* Under Bylaw 9323, a maximum of <?> minutes, unless changed by the Board, is allocated for a particular item or topic. While the Brown Act, the open meetings law under which the Board must operate, allows the Board to hear issues within its jurisdiction from the public that are not on the agenda, it only allows the Board to respond in a very limited manner such as providing direction to staff. If the Board were to have more than this type of brief discussion on an item not on the agenda, it could be a violation of the Brown Act’s rules for posting the agenda. *[Optional]* Speakers providing public comment must follow the guidelines I set forth at the beginning of the meeting.

**Script for Opening of Public Comments for Items on the Agenda**

Prior to the Board taking action on this agenda item *[If public comment is taken before Board deliberation, this can also say “Prior to the Board’s deliberation on this agenda item”]*, we will now hear any comments from the public on the item. Comments will be limited to <?> minutes each *[the following is optional]* and we will take comments from the public on this item for a total of <?> minutes. Public comment on agenda items must follow the guidelines I set forth at the beginning of the meeting.

**Guidelines for Public Comment for Items on and Not on the Agenda**

We ask that all speakers during this public comment period adhere to the following guidelines:

* We request that you please fill out a Speaker’s Card and pass it to our Executive Assistant.
* Please stand behind the podium and address the Board when speaking.
* Speak clearly so that we can hear you accurately.
* Please use language that is inoffensive and appropriate for use in front of our students, staff, and other community members in attendance. Profanity and slurs are examples of offensive language we request speakers refrain from using.
* *[if applicable]* When your time expires, a buzzer will sound (or the timer will turn red). At that point, please wrap-up your comments and return to your seat so that others may have the opportunity to comment as well.
* Please provide any written documentation in support of your comments to our Executive Assistant.

**Intervention During Public Comments for Items on and Not on the Agenda**

*[The Board President should never hesitate to use their gavel to maintain order.]*

***Example One: The speaker is using inappropriate/offensive language that is disrupting the meeting:***

< Sir/Madam/Speaker’s name (if known)>, I would like to remind you that there are students (or “others”) present. Please refrain from using language that is offensive and inappropriate for a public meeting. Our meeting guidelines are posted online in the agenda and on the wall (door, window outside, etc.). We ask that all speakers abide by them and use respectful language.

*[Unless the speaker is determined by the Chair to be disrupting the meeting, we cannot stop someone from speaking because their language is offensive and inappropriate; we can only continue to request that they stop and clean-up their language. However, if we have to warn the speaker several times about engaging in offensive and inappropriate language, and the speaker has still not complied, that can constitute “disruption” and the Board can consider whether to recess the meeting. If a speaker(s) is considered disruptive and order cannot be restored, the speaker(s) can be removed, the room can be cleared, or the meeting can be reconvened in another location. Remember, for issues that are within the governing board’s jurisdiction, we will not stop the speaker because of the viewpoint that is being expressed or because the speaker is being critical of the Board.]*

***Example Two (Disruptive speaker(s) is removed from the room):***

<Sir/Madam/Speaker’s name (if known)>, your time is up. You must now conclude your comments or *[if applicable]* we will have to turn your microphone off. This is your last warning. Please conclude your statement now or we will turn off your mic. Thank you.

*If the speaker refuses to stop talking and/or take their seat:*

<Sir/Madam/Speaker’s name (if known)>, I am notifying you again that your time to speak has ended. Please take your seat. *[pause]* Since you are refusing to take your seat, I have no choice but to turn off your mic and have you peacefully escorted from the building.

*Notify your security/school police [if applicable] to professionally remove the individual(s) from the meeting to a place where they can longer disrupt the meeting [remember that there will be individuals filming what is taking place, so professionalism is a must].*

***Example Three (Calling for a recess before clearing the room or moving the meeting to another room):***

*If the speaker refuses to stop talking and take their seat or if other disruptions are taking place:*

<Sir/Madam/Speaker’s name (if known)>, I am notifying you again that your time to speak has ended. Please take your seat. Since you are refusing to take your seat (or end your disruptive behavior), the Board will recess until order has been restored and we are able to resume the meeting. If order is not restored, we will be forced to clear the room (or move to another location) so that we can continue to conduct district business. Thank you!

*The board should then recess. If order is not restored after the break, the Board may clear the room, move the meeting to another location, or adjourn the meeting. The media must be allowed to stay in the meeting unless they are part of the disruption.*