

RULES OF ORDER

Parliamentary Procedure

- To obtain the floor to speak your mind, first address the chairperson.
- To introduce a motion, say, "I move that..."
- A motion may be withdrawn by the maker with general consent, or by majority vote if objection to withdraw is made.
- To amend a motion, say, "I move to amend the motion by ..." Ways of amending are: Striking out parts of the motion, inserting one or more words, striking out and inserting, and substituting a new motion.
- To close discussion on a motion when everyone seems to have made up his mind, informally call for the questions to be voted. Just say, "Question." If others join you in this request, the chairperson will call for a vote on the motion under discussion. The chair should avoid closing a discussion when members wish to speak. If a member calls out "Question," he must be supported by a majority in the judgment of the chair. The formal procedure is to say, "I move the previous questions." This formal motion, if made subsequent to recognition by the chairperson, needs no second, is not debatable, and must be put to a vote immediately.
- A motion to reconsider a decision made by the board must be introduced by one who voted with the prevailing side in that previous vote, but is not in order if any part of the decision has been put into action.
- If the parliamentary procedure of the board is to be questioned, say "Point of order." The chairperson must allow you to state your point, and then he must rule on it – as taken or not taken. If the chairperson denies a point of order, his decision may be appealed and either upheld or not upheld by a majority vote.
- If you have a question to ask about a matter under discussion or a procedure to be followed, say, "Point of information." The chairperson must allow you to state your question and see whether or not the information can be supplied.
- All members of the board, including the chairperson, should vote on all matters before the board. A tie vote does not gain a majority and means that the motion is defeated.
- A legal quorum or action requires the "assent of a majority of the members of the school board..." (SDCL 13-8-33) A minimum of three out of five of a five-person board, four out of seven of a seven-person board, or five out of nine of a nine-person board, must be present AND AGREE on any action. If one of the minimum numbers required to be present for a legal quorum disagrees, the motion is automatically lost. A simple majority vote, as needed for executive session, means the vote must be over 50 percent of the total votes cast to be successful.
- A school board is a public board and the vote of its official actions should be part of the published minutes. A roll call vote may not be necessary. E.g., if at the beginning of the minutes all those present is listed, later a list of those voting nay and any abstentions would be adequate. But it should be clear from the minutes how members of the board have voted. The business manager should rotate the person voting first on a matter before the board.

- Some boards provide for public comment before committee reports and others just before adjournment. In any case, once citizens have their opportunity to speak, they should be allowed to address the board only upon invitation of the chairperson.
- The primary vehicle of action is through a main motion before it is acted upon. The chairperson may assist the mover with wording for clarity.
- Each motion may deal with only one issue or idea. A chairperson or a member can ask that a motion be rephrased or rewritten or divided into two motions if it deals with two or more different matters.
- Debate should follow, not precede, a main motion. A chairperson should require a motion be stated and seconded before debate is allowed. A chairperson may allow general informal discussion, but not debate, before the motion.
- Debate must be limited to the issue at hand. Speakers who wander or attempt to enter new matters should be ruled out of order.
- No new main motions may be made while another is on the floor. See the Reference Guide for Precedence of Motions. (See BDDE-E(1))
- Main motions may be amended. Votes on amendments must be taken before the original motion.
- No more than one amendment to an amendment can be allowed or accepted for discussion.
- Before a vote on a main motion is taken, business can be interrupted by a motion to lay it on the table, to postpone action, to refer it to a committee, to withdraw it from consideration or to adjourn the meeting.
- Debate can be closed formally with a subsidiary motion (to close debate or to move the previous question) and a 2/3 affirmative vote. In cases where the chairperson believes discussion to have ended, a vote on the main motion may be taken without a formal motion to close debate unless a member objects.
- Board members need not stand before speaking.
- A motion, once voted down, cannot be renewed at the same meeting of the board without the consent of a majority of the members of the board.
- If any member acts in any respect in a disorderly manner, it shall be the privilege of any member, and the duty of the president to call him to order.
- If any member considers himself aggrieved by a decision of the chair, it shall be his privilege to appeal to the board, and the vote on such appeal shall be taken without debate.
- Members should not decline to vote on any question without weighty reasons, conflict of interest for example.
- When the chairperson has commenced taking a vote, no further debate or remark shall be admitted, unless there has evidently been some mistake, in which case, the mistake shall be rectified and the chairperson shall recommence taking the vote.

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