

League of Women Voters of Alameda
Recommendations to Enhance Open Government
Alameda Unified School District

The following suggestions are intended to promote transparency and to encourage public participation and understanding in the administration of K-12 education in Alameda. We recognize there could be additional costs for some recommendations.

<p>1. <u>Use common language:</u> avoid education speak and acronyms</p>	<p>We have changed the way we post titles of Board agenda items to make the titles easier for a person not familiar with the educational system to read. We include in the title whether the item is for information or action.</p> <p>ACTION COMMITMENT: Board to change titles of items in Agenda Building to make sure they are in common or “every day” language.</p>
<p>2. <u>Meeting notifications:</u> post agenda seven working days in advance of the AUSD School Board regular or special meetings. When last minute exceptions are necessary, clearly state the reasons for the exception (ie the state of CA requires a response by x date)</p>	<p>At a Special Board Meeting on March 5, 2013, the Board discussed its protocols and values. During this meeting, the Board gave staff direction to continue posting the agendas for regular Board Meetings on the Wednesday before the meeting, which is 5 business days prior to the meeting being held.</p> <p>ACTION COMMITMENT: The goal for the future would be to post agendas 7 days in advance of the Board meetings.</p>
<p>3. <u>Meeting agendas:</u> The descriptive title for agenda items should be brief and written in the clearest language possible so that it’s understandable by a layperson unfamiliar with the topic. Official descriptions, including education code citations, should be in parenthesis after the description for a layperson.</p>	<p>All titles of Board items are written to be as clear as possible to the layperson. Bi-monthly, to coincide with posting the Board agendas, we hold Agenda Building with the Board President and a rotating Board Member. During this meeting, all Board titles are discussed and approved by the two Board Members attending the meeting.</p> <p>ACTION COMMITMENT: To continue to improve the titles of agenda items to make them as brief and as clear as possible.</p>
<p>4. <u>Board Meeting Presentations:</u> Staff/consultant presentations to the Board should be as brief as possible to cover the topic but sufficiently complete including background information to have the public generally understand the topic and the decision to be made. Detailed written reports/Powerpoint presentations should be submitted with the agenda to accompany the narrative staff report.</p>	<p>All Board presentations are scheduled to take 15 minutes with the exception of budget items which can take up to 30 minutes. Cover pages have been designed to be more user friendly to the general public and include a cost (if applicable) or a cost savings and the departmental budget the item would come from, the item title, the item type (information or action), a brief background of the item, the name of the person submitting the item and which of the seven AUSD Guiding Principles applies to the item. We will continue to work to make presentations more concise and to stay within the time frame.</p> <p>ACTION COMMITMENT: We will follow time allocations for each item. We will use time cards to frame presentations. Staff will be coached on presentations and support will be</p>

	<p>given to meet this goal. Our goal is to create powerpoint presentations with no more than 3 bullet points per page. Presentations on budget items will include pie charts and graphs.</p>
<p>5. <u>Remote Access to School Board meetings:</u> We understand the challenges in coordinating meetings in City Council Chambers. The School Board and Alameda City should work together to manage meetings and so that the School Board has some priority in scheduling meetings. The School Board should also consider installing capabilities in an alternate location (AHS Cafeteria) to allow live and archived viewing of regular and special meeting. Each meeting location should provide for live streaming, video, public access and public comment from those who occupy an overflow site.</p>	<p>We video tape every meeting. Once taped, the meeting video is then posted to our website and linked directly to the Board meeting agenda. This allows a member of the public to “jump” to the individual item they are interested in viewing without having to fast forward through the entire meeting. The Board has not given direction to staff to install capabilities in our alternate meeting location that would allow for live viewing of our Board meetings.</p> <p>We are currently writing an Administrative Regulation that would allow us to live “tweet” each meeting. We hope to begin tweeting our Board Meetings by the end of October.</p> <p>ACTION COMMITMENT: We will investigate the use of Facebook and Tweeting in this school year.</p>
<p>6. <u>Communicating AUSD Agendas:</u> We encourage AUSD to work with the local newspapers and bloggers to publish School Board agendas and/or items anticipated to be of significant interest to the community.</p>	<p>We publish our agendas and send notice to all of the local media, including bloggers. We also include agenda item notification in our internal communications to staff and sites. We send Community Bulletins once a week to local media, sites and to the subscribers to our website. We included meeting dates and locations on each Community Bulletin.</p> <p>ACTION COMMITMENT: We will investigate how we can use an ongoing “schools column” in the Alameda Patch, Alameda Sun, and Alameda Journal to inform the public about school issues and items on the Board agendas. For example, the column could start with, “In schools this week...”.</p>
<p>7. <u>Budget:</u> A complete listing of bills paid (date, warrant number, payee, description of goods or services and amount) must be included in the packet for each trustee prior to the meeting. Additionally, the listing should be posted with the agenda after approval by the trustees. In keeping with Government Code Section 6253.9, the League recommends that District Business Office Staff begin building a repository for “native” documents, accessible electronically by the public. Further, that this repository be available within 6 months.</p> <p>Matters of a confidential nature should be noted in the listing of bills paid with a description of goods or services, including amount paid, but such documents should be maintained in a file other than the usual paid bills file. The AUSD audited financial report should be added to the</p>	<p>We started publishing Bill Warrant information online in August. All documents are posted on our website, which serves as a repository. We are in the process of refining the website and each department will have a depository for budget items.</p> <p>We do budget presentations three different ways, by site, by category and by program.</p> <p>In order to add a description of goods/services, we would have to add staff and resources. The Board has not given direction to do this at this time.</p> <p>ACTION COMMITMENT: We will continue to provide posted Bill and Warrants information.</p> <p>We are committed to a public process for the implementation of the State’s new school funding formula</p>

<p>AUSD website as well as included in the agenda packet for the AUSD Board.</p>	<p>for schools, Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF).</p>
<p>8. <u>Measure A Funds</u>: The Oversight committee for Measure should receive a copy of the Compliance Audit for the funds and the Auditor should be invited to a Committee meeting to comment on the audit. We also suggest additional strategies to inform the community about Measure A expenditures and progress toward goals including a Press Release by the chair of the Measure A Committee to the local newspapers regarding the findings of the audit and regular reports to the public on Measure A projects (in addition to the reports to the School Board).</p>	<p>We are producing an annual report in October. A presentation will be given by the president of the Oversight Committee (Courtney Shepler), as it has been given over the last two years. We are happy to include a press release to announce the annual report.</p> <p>ACTION COMMITMENT: We will issue a press release and reports to all media from the president of the Measure A Oversight Committee.</p>
<p>9. <u>Sunshine Committee</u>: The School Board should establish a separate Sunshine Committee, similar to the one established by the City of Alameda, to hear community concerns.</p>	<p>The Board has not directed staff to establish a Sunshine Committee.</p> <p>ACTION COMMITMENT: League of Women Voters will follow up with Board Members to discuss this item.</p>