
MARCH 2020

Online Engagement Guidance

In support of the Student Investment Account, this guidance outlines the minimum requirements for holding open public board meetings to review SIA plans.



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The Purpose of this Guidance

Given the unprecedented impacts of responding to COVID-19, the [SIA team has made necessary changes](#) to our approach and implementation processes to support SIA applicants. This document is designed to name:

- The minimum requirements for holding open public board meetings to review SIA plans; and
- To share guidance on how to hold effective virtual school board meetings that allow for meaningful public engagement.

Minimum Requirements

Public Input

Prior to board approval, all applicants must present their SIA Plan in an open forum with opportunity for public comment.

At a minimum, boards must accept written comments from the public prior to the meeting and acknowledge those written comments during the meeting. *To comply with Governor Brown's [Executive Order 20-12](#) (Stay Home, Save Lives), school boards would need to meet by teleconference or virtually with sufficient public notice as a minimum.*

Board Approval

All school districts and eligible charter schools are **required to obtain board approval** of their SIA Grant Application. ORS 192.670 allows school boards to hold their meetings electronically as long as the public has open and live access to the meeting.

All regular meeting requirements remain in place, which include public notice, minutes and accessibility.

To remain eligible to access SIA funds and receive support needed to complete application requirements, **SIA applicants must submit an application by April 15, 2020, even if they have not yet secured board approval.**

Implementing the Minimum Requirements: Strategies & Tips for Meaningful Virtual Public Engagement

The strategies and tips outlined below are not a required list. SIA applicants will need to determine what they can accomplish -- striking a balance between meeting the minimum requirements and supporting meaningful virtual public engagement.

Develop a Simple Virtual Public Engagement Plan

- Identify your audience and timeline.
- Determine the platform(s) you'll use to collect public comments, tool(s) you'll use to present your SIA plan and how the meeting will be held and facilitated. Think about the tools or resources you already use that can be deployed in a new way!
- Consider who needs to be informed, what information you need to share and how you'll communicate the adjusted plan for engaging the public virtually.

Pre-record a Presentation of the SIA Plan and Request Feedback

- Develop a slide deck detailing your SIA plan.
- Break up your plan into parts so it's easier to understand.
- Consider recording a voiceover of the SIA plan or hosting a webinar to walk your community through the plan. Remember, it can be simple -- it's about sharing the information with your community!
- Provide documents in different formats to make them accessible for people using different technology, mobile devices or screen readers.
- Share with families, community members and educators electronically at least one week before the scheduled board meeting.

Communicate your SIA Plan and/or Virtual Public Engagement Plan

- Plan to have multiple touch points to engage your community.
- Communicate with families and community members through newsletters, emails, district webpage, local media, partner organizations, social media and phone dialer.
- Lean on community partners to share your message and encourage virtual engagement and the submission of written testimony.

Request Written Public Input on the SIA Plan

- Request written input and feedback about the SIA plan. Dedicate an email address for people to submit their comments.

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- Provide the community opportunity to comment through written testimony or participate electronically through surveys, online polls, social media, conference calls or a live webinar.
- Ensure all public input is compiled and submitted prior to hosting the virtual board meeting for approval of the SIA Plan.

Host a Virtual Board Meeting to Approve SIA Plan

- Notify your community of the date, time and login information for the board meeting.
- Create meeting resources including an agenda, norms and documents, making them available to the public at least 24 hours before the board meeting.
- Provide clear directions on how the public can engage during the board meeting.
- Use a video conferencing option such as Zoom, GoToMeeting, YouTube Livestream or Google Hangouts to host a virtual board meeting. Test the video conferencing platform ahead of time to troubleshoot any potential problems.
- Ask participants to mute themselves to prevent background noise and utilize the chat or 'raise hand' features available in many video conferencing options to gather feedback and answer questions on the SIA plan. Have a volunteer or staff member help manage and support engagement in the chat.
- Support the board chair with an approved meeting facilitator. Create an order for board members to participate, ask questions and vote.
- Attach written public input to your meeting agenda so that it becomes public record.
- Acknowledge the written public input has been submitted and considered before the application is submitted.

ESD, OSBA & ODE Supports

Education Service Districts (ESDs)

Many ESDs and their SIA liaisons are prepared to support districts with agenda development, online facilitation and implementation of some of the tools and resources below.

Oregon School Boards Association (OSBA)

OSBA has created a [guide for using Zoom](#).

Oregon Department of Education (ODE)

ODE is available to connect you to the available supports and resources, aiming to broker connections and offer best practice provided by both ESDs and OSBA. While ODE does not have the capacity to directly facilitate or support individual district board meetings, we encourage you to reach out so that we can connect you with the right supports.

Please use the SIInfo@state.or.us to identify needs.

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Additional Resources

- [National Policy Consensus Center/Oregon's Kitchen Table](#)
- [Benefits of Online Community Engagement](#)
- [10 Things to Consider when Facilitating Online Discussion](#)
- [E-books and Guides](#)
- [A Guide to Online Community Engagement Tools](#)
- [Virtual Public Engagement Fact Sheet](#)
- [YouTube Video on Virtual Public Involvement](#)
- [Virtual Townhalls](#)
- [Virtual Public Meetings](#)
- [How to Facilitate Effective Virtual Meetings](#)
- [A local official's guide to online public engagement](#)