

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION

County Board Bylaws

B 9320.1

REMOTE MEETINGS AND ATTENDANCE

The Santa Cruz County Board of Education (County Board) recognizes the need, when permitted by law, to hold County Board meetings in which the County Board members meet remotely or in which individual County Board members attend and participate remotely.

Definitions

Local emergency means either of the following that impacts persons under the jurisdiction of the Santa Cruz County Office of Education (COE) or property within the boundaries of the COE: (Government Code 54953.8.2)

1. A condition of extreme peril proclaimed by a city, county, or city and county pursuant to Government Code 8630
2. A local health emergency proclaimed pursuant to Health and Safety Code 101080

Remote means not being physically present at the primary in-person location of a County Board meeting, and includes the terms "teleconference" and "virtual."

Remote attendance and participation means the ability to attend and participate in a County Board meeting by electronic means, through either audio or visual technology, or both.

Remote County Board Member means a County Board member, not physically present at the County Board meeting, who nonetheless seeks to attend and participate in a County Board meeting.

State of Emergency means state of emergency proclaimed pursuant to Government Code 8625.

Traditional Method of Remote Attendance

A remote County Board member may attend and participate in a County Board meeting so long as all of the following conditions are met: (Government Code 54953)

1. All votes taken during the meeting are by rollcall
2. The meeting is conducted in a manner that protects the statutory and constitutional rights of the parties or the public appearing before the County Board
3. The physical location of the remote County Board member is open and accessible to the public during the meeting, except during closed session, such that members of the public may observe in person the remote County Board member; may hear, listen to, or watch the meeting to the same extent as the remote County Board member; and may make public comment during the same portion of the agenda as other members of the public from the same location as the remote County Board member

4. The location from which the remote County Board member will attend the meeting is noted in the agenda and the agenda is posted at that location in advance of the meeting as statutorily required based on the type of meeting
5. At least a quorum of the County Board is within COE boundaries

Remote Attendance as an Accommodation

A County Board member with a qualifying disability under the Americans with Disabilities Act that precludes the County Board member from attending a County Board meeting in person or from attending and participating remotely in a County Board meeting using the method specified in "Traditional Method of Remote Attendance" above may request to attend and participate remotely as a reasonable accommodation for the County Board member's disability.

If the request is granted based on the County Board's process for reviewing reasonable accommodations, the remote County Board member shall be permitted to attend and participate in the County Board meeting as long as the following requirements are met: (Government Code 54953)

1. All votes taken during the meeting are by rollcall
2. The remote County Board member utilizes both audio and visual technology to participate in the meeting, except no visual technology shall be required if a physical condition related to their disability results in a need to participate off camera
3. The remote County Board member publicly discloses, before any action is taken, whether any individual 18 years of age or older is present at the County Board member's location and the general nature of the member's relationship with each such individual

In this circumstance, the following conditions are not required: (Government Code 54953)

1. Including the location of the remote County Board member in the agenda
2. Making the location of the remote County Board member open and accessible to the public
3. Posting the agenda at the location of the remote County Board member

Additionally, in this circumstance, the remote County Board member shall be considered to be attending in-person at the physical meeting location for all purposes, including any requirement that a quorum participate from any particular location. (Government Code 54953)

These requirements and conditions may be modified as required by law or another reasonable accommodation may be offered as appropriate.

Remote Attendance Due to Just Cause

Beginning July 1, 2026, a remote County Board member may attend and participate in a County Board meeting

based on any of the following "just cause" reasons: (Government Code 54953.8.3)

1. A childcare or caregiving need of a County Board member's child, parent, grandparent, grandchild, sibling, spouse, or domestic partner that requires the County Board member to attend and participate remotely
2. A contagious illness that prevents a County Board member from attending in person
3. A need related to a County Board member's physical or mental condition not otherwise reasonably accommodated
4. A County Board member is traveling while on official business of the County Board or another state or local agency
5. An immunocompromised child, parent, grandparent, grandchild, sibling, spouse, or domestic partner of a County Board member requires the County Board member to attend and participate remotely
6. A physical or family medical emergency prevents a County Board member from attending in person
7. Military service obligations that result in a County Board member being unable to attend in person because the County Board member is serving under official written orders for active duty, drill, annual training, or any other duty required as a member of the California National Guard or a United States Military Reserve organization that requires the County Board member to be at least 50 miles outside the boundaries of the COE

The remote County Board member shall notify the County Board at the earliest possible opportunity, including at the start of a County Board meeting, of the need to attend and participate remotely for just cause, including the general circumstances of the County Board member's need to attend and participate remotely. The remote County Board member need not disclose any medical diagnosis or disability, or any personal medical information that is otherwise exempt under existing law. The minutes for the County Board meeting shall identify the specific provision that is the basis for the just cause. (Government Code 54953, 54953.8.3)

Additionally, when a remote County Board member attends and participates in a County Board meeting based on just cause, all of the following conditions shall be met: (Government Code 54953, 54953.8, 54953.8.3)

1. All votes taken during the meeting are by rollcall
2. The meeting is conducted in a manner that protects the statutory and constitutional rights of the parties or the public appearing before the County Board
3. The public is able to access the meeting via a two-way audiovisual platform or a two-way audio service and a live webcast, with real-time public comment being allowed via the platform or service, in addition to public comment being available in person

The platform or service may require members of the public to register in order to make public comments as long as the platform or service is not controlled by the COE.

4. The agenda for the meeting includes information describing how members of the public can access the platform or service and how members of the public can offer public comment
5. The minutes of the County Board meeting state that the remote County Board member attended and participated remotely
6. At least a quorum of the County Board participates in person from a singular physical location clearly identified on the agenda and which is within COE boundaries and is open to the public
7. The remote County Board member utilizes both audio and visual technology to participate in the meeting
8. The remote County Board member publicly discloses, before any action is taken, whether any individual 18 years of age or older is present at the County Board member's location and the general nature of the member's relationship with each such individual

In this circumstance, the agenda need not include the location of the remote County Board member or be posted at that location, and the location of the remote County Board member need not be open and accessible to the public. (Government Code 54953, 54953.8)

The County Board shall give notice of the means by which members of the public may access the meeting and offer public comment. The agenda shall identify and include an opportunity for all persons to attend via a call-in option or an internet-based service option. (Government Code 54953.8)

If the platform or service is disrupted such that the public cannot access the meeting or give real-time public comment, the County Board meeting may continue but the County Board may not take action on any agenda item until public access to the meeting is restored. (Government Code 54953.8)

A remote County Board member may attend and participate in no more than two County Board meetings per year for just cause. (Government Code 54953.8.3)

A remote County Board member's attendance and participation in multiple County Board meetings that begin on the same calendar day shall only count as one County Board meeting for purposes of this limit.

Remote County Board Meetings During a Proclaimed State of Emergency

The County Board may conduct a remote County Board meeting during a proclaimed state of emergency or local emergency in either of the following circumstances: (Government Code 54953.8.2)

1. For the purpose of determining, by majority vote, whether meeting in person would present imminent risks to the health or safety of attendees due to the emergency
2. When the County Board, pursuant to Item #1 above, has determined that meeting in person would present imminent risks to the health or safety of attendees due to the emergency

In either such circumstance, the County Board may hold a remote County Board meeting without: (Government Code 54953.8, 54953.8.2)

1. Including the location of County Board members in the agenda
2. Making the locations of County Board members open and accessible to the public
3. Posting the agenda at the locations of County Board members
4. Having at least a quorum of the County Board members within the COE boundaries

When the County Board holds such a meeting, all of the following shall be followed: (Government Code 54953.8, 54953.8.2)

1. All votes taken during the meeting are by rollcall
2. The public is able to access the meeting via a call-in or audiovisual platform or service, with real-time observation of the meeting and public comment being allowed via the platform or service

The platform or service may require members of the public to register in order to make public comments so long as the platform or service is not controlled by the COE.
3. The agenda for the meeting includes information describing how members of the public can access the platform or service

The County Board may continue to conduct all County Board meetings remotely throughout one or more 45-day periods as long as, prior to the beginning of each 45-day period, the County Board has reconsidered the circumstances of the proclaimed state of emergency or local emergency and determined that it continues to directly impact the ability of the County Board to meet safely in person. (Government Code 54953.8.2)

Last reviewed: March 19, 2026

Board Adopted: March 19, 2026