



**SANTA MONICA-MALIBU UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
NEWS RELEASE**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 5, 2022**

**Public Able to Attend Board of Education Meetings
Virtually or In-person Beginning August 11, 2022**

Beginning Thursday, August 11, 2022, the public and non-executive SMMUSD staff will have the option to continue to log in to Board of Education meetings virtually via Zoom webinar or attend in-person at the district office.

“We know having the option to continue to attend board meetings on Zoom provides a convenience to the public and staff, who all have busy schedules,” current SMMUSD Board President Maria Leon-Vazquez acknowledged. “In fact, public attendance at board meetings increased dramatically during the pandemic because of the convenience offered by virtual platforms. We also know, however, that there are people who would like to attend school board meetings in person. This model addresses both interests.”

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, the public and non-executive staff have attended board meetings via a virtual software platform, and the community has been able to deliver public comment virtually as well. Such precautions were taken to limit the spread of the COVID-19 virus. The board members and executive staff returned in-person for board meetings last fall, once all SMMUSD staff had received the primary COVID-19 vaccination series.

As the number of residents who have received their COVID-19 vaccinations and boosters continues to rise, and the deadliness and severity of the virus has decreased with current mutations, the board meetings will re-open to the public, in a limited capacity.

“Given the extremely contagious nature of the recent COVID-19 sub-variants, the boardroom audience capacity will be limited to allow for some physical distancing,” SMMUSD Superintendent Ben Drati stated. “Security staff will ensure this new capacity is adhered to.”

As per the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health COVID-19 safety guidelines, members of the public are strongly encouraged to wear high-quality, well-fitting masks while in the district office.

“Safety is a priority,” Drati ensured, noting that any changes in safety guidelines from the county will be communicated with staff and the community. He added, “Any changes in COVID safety protocols from the county may result in a change to this new meeting model.”

Instructions on how the public may sign up to give public comment either virtually or in-person can be found at the top of the board meeting agenda. Persons wishing to give public comment in-person must complete one Request to Speak Card per agenda item. Those wishing to speak in the virtual environment must complete one Google Form per agenda item.

The district office is located at 1651 16th St., Santa Monica, CA. There is metered parking on 16th Street.

The August 11 board meeting will begin at 5:30 p.m., and closed session will begin at 4:30 p.m.

At this time, Malibu City Hall is not set up to accommodate this multi-platform model; therefore, board meetings will continue to be held at the district office in Santa Monica.

The agenda for this meeting will be posted on the district website:
<https://www.smmusd.org/domain/2977>

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