

BARNEVELD SCHOOL DISTRICT
OPEN AND CLOSED MEETINGS

It is the policy of the State of Wisconsin that the public be entitled to the fullest and most complete information regarding the affairs of the government. "Meeting" means the convening of members of a governmental body for the purpose of exercising the responsibilities, authority, power or duties delegated to or vested in the body. If one-half or more of the members of a governmental body are present, the meeting is presumed to be for the purpose of exercising the responsibilities, authority, power or duties delegated to or vested in the body. The term "meeting" does not include any social or chance gathering or conference which is not intended to avoid the open meeting law.

The Open Meeting Law applies when a governmental body is gathering information on or discussing a subject matter, not simply when it is taking action. The attorney general has stated that the only way to strictly comply with the letter and spirit of the Open Meeting Law is to adopt a policy under which board members and citizens who wish to bring up items for board discussion at a meeting must contact the chairperson in advance in order to have the specific subject included on the public notice of the meeting. If the meeting notice contains a general subject matter designation, the public may raise issues and questions to the board. If a subject that was not specifically noticed comes up at the meeting, however, the board may ask questions for clarification, briefly discuss the matter, but may not take any action.

The board should limit itself to answering basic questions from the public that do not require board discussion or deliberation and to placing the matter on a future agenda or referring it to an official or a committee.

Open meetings of school boards must be preceded with public notification. Notice must be given to the public, the news media who have filed written requests and the official newspaper. The Dodgeville Chronicle is designated as the Barneveld School District's official newspaper.

Proper notice of a meeting must be given at least 24 hours in advance unless a good cause exists where such notice is "impossible or impractical". When good cause can be shown, the notice must be provided at least 2 hours in advance of the meeting. Notice must include the time, date and place of the meeting. The notice must contain the subject matter of the meeting including what is intended for consideration in a closed meeting and the specific statutory exemption which authorizes a closed meeting.

The open meeting law is applicable to formally constituted sub-units of the board such as board created committees when a majority of Board Members may attend or when less than a majority of the body could exercise a negative power to defeat a proposal. The board or its personnel (including grievance processing) are covered by the law.

Wisconsin Statutes Section: 19.82(2)
19.83(2)
19.84(2)(3)
19.85

Adopted: December 10, 2014
Revised: January 13, 2016