

Oregon Public Meeting Law – Guidelines for District committees Regarding compliance with Oregon’s Public Meetings Law

The Oregon Public Meetings Law, ORS 192.620, establishes a strong public value for open meetings by decision-making governing bodies. The Public Meetings Law applies to the Board of Education, and also applies to committees that are authorized to make recommendations directly to the Board. Portland Public Schools take compliance with the Public Meetings Law very seriously. This memo is intended to provide guidance to committees regarding compliance with the law.

What committees are subject to the Public Meetings Law?

Under the law, any committee that is authorized to make recommendations directly the Board of Education is subject to the Public Meetings Law, ORS 192.610 (3). The law applies even if the committee consists entirely of private citizens. Generally, committees authorized to make recommendations directly to the Board will be those committees appointed by the Board. However, the superintendent may also designate committees who are authorized to make recommendations directly to the Board. Committees that report directly to the superintendent or designee may not make recommendations directly to the Board. If they do so, the committee will become subject to the Public Meetings Law.

When does the Public Meetings Law apply?

The law applies when a quorum of the committee meets for the purpose of deliberating towards a decision or gathering information that may inform a future decision or recommendation of the committee. This is a broad definition, so the committee should assume that the Public Meetings Law applies whenever a quorum of the committee meets regarding the business of the committee.

What rules apply to Public Meetings?

When a quorum of a committee meets, the committee must: (1) give at least 24-hour notice of the meeting, (2) hold meetings that are open to the public, and (3) take minutes or otherwise record the meeting. Meetings must be held within the district boundaries, and must be accessible to people with disabilities. Translation/interpretation services must be made available upon request. Committees are not required to take public comment or testimony, but may choose to do so.

Where can committees get assistance with complying with these requirements?

The Board of Education Office can assist committees with these requirements, and the General Counsel is also available to answer questions about compliance with the law.

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