

3.B. VERMONT OPEN MEETING LAW

According to 16 V.S.A. §554, school boards must follow Vermont’s open meeting law (1 V.S.A. §§310-314). Under that law, all meetings of a public body are declared to be open at all times. No resolution, policy, appointment, or formal action will be valid unless it was taken or made at an open meeting. A meeting is defined as a quorum of the members of a school board gathered for the purpose of discussing the business of the Board or for the purpose of taking action. This means that all school board meetings, including meetings of committees and subcommittees, must be open to the public and must give reasonable opportunity for public participation.

The public must be given notice of a school board meeting. The amount and type of notice required depends on the type of meeting held. The following chart highlights these differences:

Meeting Type	Notice to Board		Agenda	Minutes
	Members	Notice to Public & Media		
Regular Time & place stated in board policy or bylaw.	No legal requirement	No legal requirement but must be provided to media and concerned persons upon request.	Posted to the website, in the municipal office and at least two other public places 48 hours before meeting. It also is available to media and concerned persons upon request.	Posted to the website and available within 5 days of meeting indicating: Members present Other active participants Motions made & their disposition Results of votes, with record of each member’s vote if roll call requested by board.
Special Not fixed by policy or bylaws, called for a specific purpose	Written or oral notice 24 hrs in advance unless waived	Publicly announced (give to news media) at least 24 hours prior to meeting; posted in municipal clerk’s office and 2 other locations in town. An individual may request in writing to be notified of special meetings.	Posted in same location as regular meeting, 24 hours before meeting. (Can only discuss items posted on warned agenda)	Same as regular meeting.
Emergency To respond to unforeseen occurrence or condition requiring immediate attention.	No legal requirement.	Public notice of meeting given as soon as possible before the meeting.	Posted in same locations as regular meeting as soon as possible. (Can only discuss items posted on warned agenda)	Same as regular meeting.
Electronic One or more members of the public body may participate in a meeting electronically	At least one member of public body (or designee) must be physically present at each designated location	24 hours notice in municipal office and 2 designated places Designate physical location(s) for the public to participate	Same.	Same.