



COVID-19 and Emergency Board Meetings

We know that all of you are considering how best to proceed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the rapidly changing situation it has presented. As many of you may already know, ADE issued guidance last night, and it can be found [here](#). It addresses many situations, including school closure decisions, although there is still much uncertainty about upcoming testing and whether you will need to make up any missed instructional hours. We will share any information about those issues as we learn it.

Many of your governing boards may be meeting soon to decide whether to close your schools and for how long. Arizona's Open Meeting Law allows a governing board to hold an emergency session without giving 24 hours' notice, as is typically required. We believe that this situation qualifies as an "actual emergency" under the Open Meeting Law.

Here's what you need to do in order to hold an emergency board meeting:

- Give as much notice of the meeting as you can (in the same way you would provide notice of a regular board meeting), but you do not have to give 24 hours' notice.
- Within 24 hours **after** the meeting, post a public notice that
 - indicates that the board held an emergency meeting, and
 - provides information about the issues discussed or decided by the board at the meeting. To do that, you can simply include a copy of the agenda with the notice of the emergency meeting.

Here are some additional things that we suggest that you do:

- Include only topics related to the emergency situation on the emergency meeting agenda. Do not use this as an opportunity to address things that could be addressed by the board in a regularly-noticed board meeting.
- Consider whether you want to include a Call to the Public at this meeting. There is no requirement that you do so, even if you typically have a Call to the Public on your meeting agendas.
- Make notes regarding why you believed that the situation was an emergency (e.g., quickly developing medical situation with official guidance changing hourly and the need to protect your school

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community) and keep that information with your official board meeting documents. You may never need to use it, but at least you will have it.

Finally, **make certain that you notify ADE immediately** of the potential closure and/or your decision to close. The guidance says that you should request approval from and/or notify them about school closures by email to SFAlystTeam@azed.gov.

Let us know if we can assist you in any way in dealing with the issues surrounding this very fluid situation.

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