

THE BROWN ACT

The Brown Act governs meeting access to local meetings.

PURPOSES

- To keep the public informed of the actions, debates and views of locally elected representatives; and
- To provide the procedural framework for the local legislators to meet, debate, act and listen collectively to their constituents.

OPEN MEETING REQUIREMENTS

- Councils and committees are subject to open meeting requirements:
 - School Site Council (SSC)
 - School English Learner Advisory Committee (SELAC)
 - NOT SUBJECT: Temporary subcommittees with less than quorum

AGENDA REQUIREMENTS

- How to publicize meetings
 - Post in public locations-easily accessible to public members
 - Mail to person requesting mailed notice (1 year request)
- When to post agenda
 - 72 hours before a regularly scheduled meeting
 - 24 hours before a special meeting
- Content of Agenda
 - Time and location of meeting
 - Agenda items in sufficient detail to allow public to determine whether to participate ("brief" description)
 - Include "Public Comments" on the agenda

PUBLIC COMMENTS AT A MEETING

- Public right to participate in meetings
 - Parents, guardians, community members, etc. have the right to comment at meetings.
 - School sites may adopt reasonable regulations on public comments and the conduct of public meetings, including measures to address disruptive conduct and irrelevant speech.
 - Include the regulations in your bylaws. (A time limit on public comments is acceptable. A two-minute limit is reasonable at school sites and at Board Meetings.)

COPIES OF MEETING MATERIALS

- If requested, send the entire agenda packet, to any person who has filed a written request for such materials. These copies shall be sent at the time the agenda is posted. If requested, these materials must be made available in appropriate alternative formats to persons with disabilities. Primary language materials may also be requested.
- A request for notice is valid for one calendar year and renewal requests must be filed January 1 of each year. The legislative body may establish a fee to recover the cost of providing the service. Failure of the requesting person to receive the agenda does not constitute grounds for invalidation of actions taken at the meeting.

MEETING SCENARIOS OF WHICH TO AVOID

- If requested, the entire agenda packet, to any person who has filed a written request for such materials
- E-mail messages in which majority of Board is copied;
- Consecutive conversations through intermediary to poll the Board;
- Telephone conference calls involving a majority of the Board;
- Internet Chat rooms. § (Gov. Code §54952.2 ©(1))

Adapted from presentation by C. Funk and A Guide to the Ralph M. Brown Act