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POLICY 1400, 1420

Special meeting requirements

In light of recent legislative changes, WSSDA has revised Policy 1400. Additional revisions were made to clarify other legal requirements and make the policy more comprehensive.

Notice requirements

This session the Washington Legislature added requirements for announcing special meetings. Individuals testifying at the legislative hearings voiced concerns over the public's lack of knowledge that local governments were holding special meetings. These statutory changes are designed to increase notice to the public of such meetings of any public entity subject to the Open Public Meetings law.

As applied to school districts, the law provides that a "special meeting" may be called by the board chair/president, or at the request of a majority of the board members. Written notice stating the time and place of the special meeting and the business to be transacted must be provided to each board member as well as to each local newspaper, radio or TV station that has requested, in writing, notice of such meetings. That notice must be provided at least 24 hours before the meeting. The bill, which went through a number of amendments, added the following requirements:

- The notice must also be posted on the district's website unless:
 - The district doesn't have a webpage;
 - The district employs fewer than ten



- full-time equivalent employees; or
- The district does not have an employee whose job description or employment contract provides a duty to maintain or update the website.

In these circumstances, the sentence in the policy regarding posting notice on the website does not need to be included in the policy.

- The district must prominently display the notice at the main entrance of the district's headquarters as well as at the location of the meeting if the meeting is held at a location other than the headquarters.
- All required notices must be delivered or posted not less than twenty-four (24) hours prior to the meeting.

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This law, which applies to all public agencies, took effect June 7, 2012 and applies to all special meetings held on or after that date.

Board members' waiver of notice

The bill also addressed waiver of notice provisions. As noted above, the law requires that written notice of the meeting must be provided to each board member 24 hours prior to the meeting. The law has always provided that this notice requirement may be dispensed with under certain circumstances including by the member filing a written waiver before or at the time of the meeting or by the member's actual attendance at the meeting. During this session, the legislature clarified that under these circumstances the notice requirement is deemed to be waived.

Policy 1400 was revised to include these waiver provisions.

Agenda

Both Policy 1400 and Policy 1420 were revised to state that final action can be taken only on those matters which were listed in the public notice of a special meeting. While this limitation was part of the original law, we felt it would be helpful to include this information in the policies.

Public comment

WSSDA received input that moving the public comment provisions from Policy 1430, Audience Participation, would help unify the provisions affecting public meetings. Accordingly, the content of these policies is combined under Policy 1400. This particular change is purely discretionary and districts may choose to keep the provisions separate.

POLICY 6801

Auditor raises concerns regarding theft-sensitive assets

WSSDA has revised Policy and Procedure 6801 to more specifically address the identification of "theft-sensitive" assets. As with Policy 6220, revised in the April 2012 issue of *Policy News*, this revision resulted from conversations with the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). Similar to the federal bidding requirements covered by Policy 6220, the need for this revision became apparent during the Consolidated Program Reviews

(CPR) undertaken by OSPI this year.

This past year OSPI conducted reviews at 64 districts throughout the state. During these reviews, OSPI raised concerns to a number of districts regarding their theft-sensitive assets identification process. OSPI's concern was that the district's policies did not require that these assets be specifically identified. WSSDA worked with OSPI to develop revisions to Policy and Procedure 6801 to address these audit issues.



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