

# Conducting Board Meetings *in Today's Environment*



**With school buildings and non-essential businesses closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, boards of education are faced with the challenges of conducting public meetings. *Here are some things to keep in mind:***

## **Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA)**

This law was modified to accommodate periods of emergency. During a state of emergency, public health emergency, or state of local disaster emergency, a public body will not be in violation of OPMA as long as it elects to perform any of the following by "means of communication or other electronic equipment:"

- conduct a meeting and any public business;
- cause a meeting to be open to the public;
- vote;
- receive public comment;
- provide electronic notice of such meeting in lieu of the notice provisions provided under the OPMA.

The public body is still required to provide notice of the meeting, but is permitted to do so electronically. They can meet this requirement by posting the agenda on their district website, which they have always done. To the extent practicable, if notice of the meeting is electronic, the public business discussed or taking place at that meeting shall be limited to matters necessary for the continuing operation of government and which relate to the applicable emergency declaration.

## **Topics to look for on your board agenda:**

- Privatization,
- Non-renewals,
- Board Policy changes.

## **Strategies for addressing the above:**

1. Contact your field representative immediately regarding any of the matters listed above.
2. Maintain open lines of communication with your superintendent and BOE president.
3. Ask for the meeting's agenda to be sent to the president at least two days prior to meeting, if not specified in your current collective bargaining agreement.
4. Start a board watch committee that reviews board agendas and past meeting minutes.
5. Review budget presentations.
6. Keep in touch with your members, specifically non-tenured members and members on CAPs.

***Be sure to have at least one member of you local's executive committee attend the virtual board meeting.***

