

Holding Board Meetings

Taken from WSSDA

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Face Coverings Required

Currently, school boards opting to host in-person public meetings under the Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA) may do so without restriction on capacity and without physical distancing requirements. However, face coverings are required in any indoor space. Additionally, Proclamation 20-25.15 prohibits “any governmental, commercial, or nonprofit entity or private party from allowing any individual to enter or remain in any indoor space under their control unless the individual is in compliance with the secretary of health’s face covering order and any subsequent amendments.”

What to Do if Persons Refuse to Wear a Face Covering

- The first response is a pleasant reminder that wearing a face covering is required.
- School district must refuse admittance to *anyone* who refuses to wear a face covering. This refusal of admittance includes board directors, members of the executive team, and staff.
- Remind anyone who is resistant to wearing a face covering that virtual access to the meeting is available.
- If someone enters wearing a face covering, but then removes their face covering (other than for something such as taking a brief sip of water from a water bottle), remind them that they must wear a face covering or leave and that virtual access to the meeting is available.
- Anyone refusing to wear/continue to wear a face covering has disrupted the meeting and made it unfeasible. The board must do one of the following:
 - Remove anyone who refuses to wear a face covering, including board members
 - Clear the room entirely and readmit all individuals not responsible for the disruption. The board will admit/readmit any representatives of the news media, except those participating in a disturbance. RCW 42.30.050.
 - Recess/adjourn the meeting to another place and/or time. Currently, all open public meetings can be held in an entirely virtual format.

Other Considerations for Board Meetings

- Remember that offering an in-person component to a board meeting is optional, whereas offering a virtual component is required. Nothing prevents school boards from holding board meetings in an entirely virtual manner, which avoids disruption over face coverings.
- Failing to enforce face covering requirements opens the school district to liability.