

Key Takeaways—Education and School Board Law webinar Vol. 2 (Public Records and Open Meetings)

The following are general best practices for school board members on the question of public records requests and open meetings laws. These were shared as part of CALN's Education and School Board webinar on Dec. 13, 2024.

Please note: These summaries can provide you with helpful information, but they do not and are not intended to constitute legal advice or create an attorney-client relationship. Instead, they are for general informational purposes only. You are encouraged to contact your board attorney, or to hire a personal attorney, to obtain advice with respect to legal matters.

Best practices:

- Keep your decision-making process within the public view
- While remote, only conduct board business using official channels, such as through district-provided phones and email addresses
- Ensure that minutes are kept for all public meetings and promptly published on your district's website in a clearly designated area
- Consider livestreaming all public meetings, including the important work done by board-level policy committees
- Communicate with your superintendent about staffing and support needs to handle public records requests
- Communicate with your superintendent about responding to public records requests with prompt attention, manpower, and clear communication
- Hold your superintendent accountable for compliance with public records and open meetings laws
- Embrace transparency and accountability in your official duties—it's why voters elected you!

Avoid this:

- Taking an adversarial approach toward public records requests and open meetings requirements

- Using closed or executive session for unjustified purposes, as this violates the law.



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- Failing to hold your superintendent accountable for withholding public records that are not exempt from disclosure. Remember, your state laws clearly spell out which records are, and are not, considered confidential. If you need clarification, seek guidance from your board attorney.
- Letting transparency fall to the wayside when it may seem inconvenient or resource intensive.

Please note: The transmission and receipt of information contained in this summary does not form or constitute an attorney-client relationship. Anyone receiving any part of this information should not act upon the information without seeking professional legal counsel.