



RICK GUNDRUM

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 58TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Assembly Committee on Local Government
Wednesday, May 22, 2019
Room 400 Northeast
Testimony on Assembly Bill 170

Thank you to Chairman Novak and fellow members of the Assembly Committee on Local Government for holding a public hearing on Assembly Bill 170 and providing me with the opportunity to testify in favor of this legislation.

Assembly Bill 170 updates outmoded language in our state statutes relating to notice requirements for special meetings of a school board. Under current law, the school district clerk or president must either personally deliver the meeting notice or send it via first class mail to a member's place of residence at least 24 hours before the meeting.

In an effort to modernize and streamline this process, AB 170 grants school boards with the flexibility to determine the appropriate mode of communication for providing notice of a special school board meeting. This could include notice by email, text message, phone call, or the current law requirement of mailed or personally delivered notice. These modifications largely mirror the changes that were made for city councils last session through 2017 Act 50.

AB 170 retains the current law requirement that notice be provided at least 24 hours before the meeting. Additionally, the bill mirrors the state's open meetings law (namely, s. 19.84(3), Stats.) to allow for exceptions to the 24-hour notice requirement for true "emergency meetings," as long as good cause is shown by the school district clerk or president for not adhering to the 24-hour notice requirement. Finally, the bill clarifies whose responsibility it is to determine the date, time, and place of the special meeting.

This bill is supported by the Wisconsin Association of School Boards (WASB).

Thank you for your time and consideration of Assembly Bill 170. I would be open to taking any of your questions.

Thank you Chairman Novak and members of the Assembly Committee on Local Government for the opportunity to testify. Thank you as well to Vice-Chair Representative Gundrum for drafting and introducing this bill as well as for the representation he provides to District 58 of Washington County and the West Bend School District.

In 2018, during the West Bend School board's policy review of the 100 series, related to Board Operations, the method to notify members of a special meeting was identified as outdated and in need of revision. In discussion with Dan Rossmiller and Dan Mallin of WASB, it was apparent the most beneficial course of action would be to enact a technical change to the law (state statutes) rather than modify or revise our local policy. That is why I am appearing before you today. Ultimately, school boards seek efficient, timely processes that are in alignment with state law. In addition there is also a cost savings as electronic notification eliminates the need for paper and postage or hand delivery.

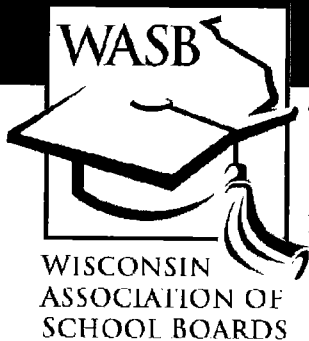
AB 170 is a technical change to the law, modernizing the notice provision for special meetings of school boards to reflect more efficient means of communication available in the 21st century. This bill affects only the way notice is provided to school board members. It does not affect the notices required to be provided to members of the media or the public.

Under current law, the clerk of a school board or board president must notify each school board member of a special meeting of the school board. The meeting notice must be personally delivered via U.S. Mail to each member or left at the member's place of residence by the clerk or board president at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting.

AB 170 deletes the current requirement that notice of a special meeting be delivered in writing to the board member's usual abode and replaces it with language allowing a board president or clerk to inform members in a manner likely to give each member notice of the meeting. This could include notice by phone call, texting, email or in writing. Similar to Assembly Bill 145 (enacted last session as 2017 Wisconsin Act 50 that updated the outmoded meeting notice requirements for city councils), the bill creates flexibility where none currently exists.

Thank you for considering these comments and recommendations. I encourage you to support Assembly Bill 170.

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West Bend resident
Former West Bend School Board member



"Leadership in Public School Governance"

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TO: Members, Assembly Committee on Local Government
FROM: Dan Rossmiller, WASB Government Relations Director
DATE: May 22, 2019
RE: SUPPORT for ASSEMBLY BILL 170, relating to the method for providing notice of a special meeting of a school board

The Wisconsin Association of School Boards (WASB) **supports** Assembly Bill 170.

Assembly Bill 170 is a sensible, technical change to state statutes, modernizing the meeting notice provisions for special meetings of school boards to reflect changes in the way we communicate today.

The changes made in the bill are patterned on 2017 Assembly Bill 145, which modernized the method required to be used by city governments when providing notice of a special city council meeting to alderpersons. That bill was enacted into law as 2017 Wisconsin Act 50.

Under current law, when a special meeting of a school board is called, the board clerk or, in the clerk's absence, the board president must notify each school board members in writing of the time and place of the special meeting at least 24 hours before the meeting.

Current law provides that the written notice of the meeting must either be delivered to each school board member personally, left at the usual place of abode of the school board member, or mailed by 1st class mail to the usual place of abode of the school board member so as to arrive at least 24 hours before the special school board meeting.

This language made sense in a world without personal computers, cell phones and other electronic devices. However, the way we communicate has changed and our statutes should reflect those changes.

Under this bill, school board member could receive notification by a phone call, email or by text message at any location. Because of the almost instant nature of electronic communications, board members are likely to become aware of the special meeting far more quickly and at less expense than under the notification methods specified under by current law.

In our current era of electronic communication, the current statutory requirements have become outdated. They should be updated.

This is a common sense bill. We encourage your support of Assembly Bill 170.