



Luther S. Olsen

State Senator

14th District

TO: Senate Committee on Education
FROM: Senator Luther Olsen
DATE: Tuesday, September 16, 2019
SUBJECT: Testimony for Senate Bill 160

Thank you members of the Senate Committee on Education for holding a hearing and allowing me to testify in support of Senate Bill 160 (SB 160).

Under current law, if a school board plans to hold a special meeting the clerk of a school district or school district president must notify each member of the school board in writing at least 24 hours ahead of time. This notice must be delivered personally to each board member or delivered by first class mail to the member's home.

This legislation updates current practice and allows for more flexibility by giving the school boards the option to give notice of a special meeting by email, text message, phone call, personally, or via first class mail as is current practice.

As technology continues to evolve it is important that we allow for more flexibility by letting school districts communicate in more efficient and convenient manners. This bill retains the current law requirement that notice must be provided at least 24 hours in advance unless it is an emergency meeting, which mirrors the state's open meetings law requirements.

Again, thank you for holding a hearing today. I ask for your support on SB 160 and I would be more than happy to answer any questions.



RICK GUNDRUM

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 58TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Senate Committee on Education
Tuesday, September 17, 2019
Room 330 Southwest
Testimony on Senate Bill 160

Thank you to Chairman Olsen and members of the Senate Committee on Education for holding a public hearing on Senate Bill 160 and providing me with the opportunity to testify in favor of this legislation.

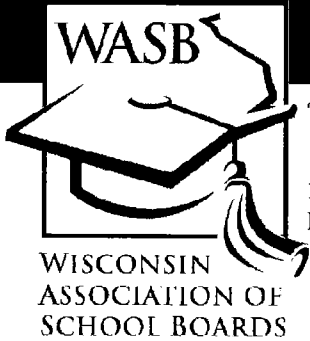
Senate Bill 160 simply updates outmoded language in our state statutes relating to notice requirements for special meetings of a school board. Under current law, the school district clerk or president must either personally deliver the meeting notice or send it via first class mail to a member's place of residence at least 24 hours before the meeting.

In an effort to modernize and streamline this process, SB 160 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.

SB 160 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 Senate Bill 160. I would be open to taking any of your questions.



"Leadership in Public School Governance"

JOHN H. ASHLEY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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TO: Members, Senate Committee on Education
FROM: Dan Rossmiller, WASB Government Relations Director
DATE: September 17, 2019
RE: SUPPORT for SENATE BILL 160, relating to the method for providing notice of a special meeting of a school board

The Wisconsin Association of School Boards (WASB) **supports** Senate Bill 160.

Senate Bill 160 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 Senate Bill 160.