



STATE OF INDIANA

MIKE BRAUN, Governor

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July 30, 2026

Re: Complaint 25-FC-348
Jean P. Brune (Complainant) v.
Adams Central Community Schools (Respondent)

This advisory opinion is issued in response to the above-referenced complaint filed on November 7, 2025.

A Notice of Complaint, along with a copy of the complaint, was sent to the Respondent on November 12, 2025, requesting a formal response by December 12, 2025. A formal response, submitted by Interim Superintendent Brent Lehman on behalf of Respondent, was received in this office on December 1, 2025.

The complaint alleges that Respondent violated the Open Door Law (ODL) when a meeting of the Board took place without public notice or public access.

ANALYSIS

ODL requires public agencies to conduct and take official actions openly, unless otherwise expressly provided by statute, so the people may be fully informed. Indiana Code (IC) 5-14-1.5-1. As a result, the ODL requires all meetings of the governing bodies of public agencies to be open at all times to allow members of the public to observe and record the proceedings. IC 5-14-1.5-3(a).

Respondent is a public agency for the purposes of ODL, and therefore, subject to the requirements. IC 5-14-1.5-2(a)(1). As a result, unless an exception applies, all meetings of Respondent should be posted by notice and open to the public.

Complainant alleges that during an education day, on-site at a school facility, the School Board held a meeting with faculty of the school and discussed the issue of discontinuing the recognition of valedictorian and salutatorian for top performing students and move to a Cum Laude program. Complainant alleged

that such a meeting violated the ODL regarding public notice and public access.

ODL defines a meeting as a gathering of a majority of the governing body of a public agency for the purpose of taking official action upon public business. IC 5-14-1.5-2(c).

While it appears that the first component of a “public meeting” was met with having a majority of the governing body, it is the intent of the meeting that becomes determinative.

The definition of meeting requires the intent to take official action on public business. *Official action is defined as:*

- (1) receive information;
- (2) deliberate;
- (3) make recommendations;
- (4) establish policy;
- (5) make decisions; or
- (6) take final action.

IC 5-14-1.5-2(d).

The definition of public business, IC 5-14-1.5-2(e), states that:

“Public business” means any function upon which the public agency is empowered or authorized to take official action.

Opinion of the Public Access Counselor 25-FC-286.

ODL provides an avenue for the entire School Board to visit the school facilities and gather information as an exception to the public meeting provisions. ODL states at IC 5-14-1.5-2(c)(2):

(c) "Meeting" means a gathering of a majority of the governing body of a public agency for the purpose of taking official action upon public business. It does not include any of the following:

...

(2) Any on-site inspection of any:

- (A) project;
- (B) program; or
- (C) facilities of applicants for incentives or assistance from the governing body.

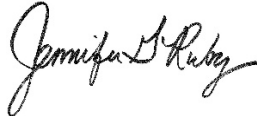
The on-site tour of the school did include presentations of HEA-1 impacts on operations and highlights of the facilities programs and operation. These discussions would be tantamount to a tour for the benefit of the Board.

What does not fit the exception above, and the issue of the complaint, was the meeting held with faculty to discuss the Cum Laude program, unrelated to the facility itself and a matter of policy for the entire school system. The receipt of information from the teachers and administrators was official action under the definition above. The topic of a policy change and impact on the school constitute official business.

ODL provides that public notice shall be given by the governing body of a public agency by positing a copy of the notice at the principal office of the public agency holding the meeting or, if no such office exists, at the building where the meeting is to be held. IC 5-14-1.5-5(b)(1). Since there were no exceptions under the ODL for the type of meeting held between the School Board and teachers, the meeting would be a public meeting under ODL. Neither notice nor access was provided.

CONCLUSION

This office finds that the Respondent violated ODL as alleged in the complaint.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Jennifer G. Ruby".

Jennifer G. Ruby
Public Access Counselor