

MS 123B.09 Publishing Proceedings. “The board must cause its official proceedings to be published once in the official newspaper of the district. Such publication shall be made within 30 days of the meeting at which such proceedings occurred. If the board determines that the publication of a summary of the meetings would adequately inform the public of the substance of the proceedings, the board may direct that only a summary be published, conforming to the requirements of section 331A.01, subdivision 10.”

The practice of the Becker School District is to publish official school board meeting minutes in the paper after the school board has approved them. The school board meets monthly and approves the minutes from the previous meeting. For example, the February 6th minutes will be approved by the board on March 5th and published on March 10th. The Minnesota School Boards' Association informed me that this is the practice of most school districts in Minnesota and a reasonable interpretation of the statute.

It is permissible for the school board to authorize a summary of the meeting to be published as defined by MS 331A.01, “Subdivision 10. “Summary” means an accurate and intelligible abstract or synopsis of the essential elements of proceedings, ordinances, resolutions, financial statements, and other official actions. It shall be written in a clear and coherent manner, and shall, to the extent possible avoid the use of technical or legal terms not generally familiar to the public. When a summary is published, the publication shall clearly indicate that the published material is only a summary and that the full text is available for public inspection at a designated location or by standard or electronic mail. A summary published in conformity with this section shall be deemed to fulfill all legal publication requirements as completely as if the entire matter which was summarized had been published. No liability shall be asserted against a political subdivision in connection with the publication of a summary or agenda.”

The summary of the board meeting would be published the Saturday following each board meeting in lieu of the official school board minutes being published approximately one month later. Publishing a summary would be timelier and reduce expense to the district, as the summary would be more succinct than the minutes. The official minutes would continue to be posted on the district website and available for public view in the district office. Publishing a meeting summary meets the requirements of 123B.09, subdivision 10.

Options available to the school board include:

- A. Take no action. Continue the district’s practice of publishing meeting minutes after the board approves them.
- B. Authorize that only a summary of the meeting proceedings be published pursuant to section MS 331A.01, subdivision 10.