



Title 16 — Transparency and Government Accountability (Wyoming Statutes)

The Wyoming laws that protect your right to public records, open meetings, and government accountability.

Wyoming school districts are public entities, therefore they are not permitted to operate in secrecy. Title 16 contains Wyoming's key transparency laws. These laws protect the public's right to inspect government records, attend public meetings, and hold public bodies accountable.

For parents, Title 16 matters because it is often the only way to obtain documentation about what is happening inside schools and districts, curriculum resources, vendor contracts, training materials, complaint records, communications, and policy decisions.

Important: *This page is not legal advice. It is a parent-friendly overview and reference guide to Wyoming law.*

Official Statute Source

To read the full text of Title 16, visit the Wyoming Legislature / Legislative Service Office (LSO):
<https://wyoleg.gov/statutes/compress/title16.pdf>

What Title 16 Covers (Parent-Relevant Sections)

Title 16 contains many government-related statutes, but for parents and school accountability, two areas are most important:

1) Wyoming Public Records Act

W.S. 16-4-201 through 16-4-205

These statutes establish the public's right to inspect and receive copies of public records held by state and local agencies.

2) Wyoming Open Meetings Law (Public Meetings Law)

W.S. 16-4-401 through 16-4-408

These statutes require that public bodies conduct public business openly, with notice, public participation rules, and minutes requirements.

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Part 1: Wyoming Public Records Act ([W.S. 16-4-201 to 205](#))

Your right to inspect and request government records.

The Public Records Act provides that public records must be open for inspection “at reasonable times, during business hours,” unless a specific exemption applies.

Why this matters for parents

Parents commonly use public records requests to obtain:

- curriculum materials and instructional resources
- vendor contracts (ex: curriculum vendors, SEL programs, DEI trainers)
- staff training slides and professional development materials
- district emails and communications about controversial policies
- complaint procedures and complaint outcome records (with privacy limits)
- board packets and supporting documents used in decision-making

Key points parents should understand

- “Public records” includes more than just finalized documents. Many internal documents, emails, and materials can qualify.
- Agencies can charge reasonable copy fees, and may charge search/retrieval fees for electronic records under certain conditions.
- An agency cannot simply ignore a request — the statute provides a pathway for denial, partial denial, or litigation if necessary.

Part 2: Wyoming Open Meetings Law ([W.S. 16-4-401 to 408](#))

Your right to watch decision-making happen.

Wyoming’s Open Meetings Law exists because public agencies are meant to conduct public business openly. The law states that agencies exist to conduct public business and that certain deliberations and actions must be taken openly.

Why this matters for parents

Parents use Open Meetings Law protections to ensure:

- board meetings are properly noticed
- decisions are made in public, not behind closed doors
- agenda items are not hidden or rushed
- the public is allowed to attend and observe

- minutes reflect board action and accountability

Key points parents should understand

Meetings must be open to the public, except for limited lawful executive session topics.

- Public bodies must provide notice of meetings (regular and special meetings have different notice requirements).
- The public is entitled to minutes and information about board action.

Executive Sessions: What Can Be Closed? (W.S. 16-4-405)

School boards sometimes announce they are going into an “executive session” (closed meeting). Wyoming law does allow executive sessions—but only for specific purposes.

Executive session rules are listed in **W.S. 16-4-405**.

What the law allows in executive session

A public body may go into executive session only for certain topics, including:

1) Security / Threat discussions with law enforcement: Boards may meet privately with certain attorneys or law enforcement officials to discuss threats (including threats to property or threats to the public’s right of access).

2) Personnel matters: Boards may meet privately to consider the appointment, employment, dismissal, or complaints/charges involving an employee or public officer—**unless that person requests a public hearing**.

3) Confidential matters protected by law: Boards may meet privately when a topic involves information that is legally confidential under state or federal law.

4) Safety and security planning: Boards may meet privately for safety/security planning when disclosure would threaten safety of life or property.

Important Parent Notes

- **A board cannot go into executive session just because a topic is uncomfortable.** The reason must be one allowed by law.
- **They must make a motion stating the reason** for executive session. The motion must cite the lawful reason (that is considered sufficient notice).
- **No final action can be taken in executive session.** Any official decision or vote must happen in the open meeting. Action taken unlawfully can be **null and void**.
- **Executive session minutes are confidential** except in very limited circumstances (e.g., court order).

How Parents Use Title 16

Here are the most common ways parents use Title 16:

- To request curriculum resources (books, digital materials, lesson plans, vendors)
- To obtain staff training materials (DEI/SEL, behavior programs, discipline)
- To investigate policy changes (board packets, communications, contracts)
- To confirm board transparency (meeting notice, agendas, minutes, recordings)
- To document facts before filing complaints or raising concerns publicly