

Interim Guidelines for Public Participation at Meetings of the Chicago Board of Education

The following Interim Guidelines for Public Participation are issued by the President of the Board of Education of the City of Chicago (“Board President” and “Board”) in accordance with Board Rule 2-4.1. These Interim Guidelines replace the Emergency Guidelines issued March 20, 2020 and are effective July 26, 2021. During the period they are in effect, these Interim Guidelines supersede the Public Participation Guidelines issued August 28, 2013 (rev. September 13, 2018).

The Board President may rescind, suspend or amend these Interim Guidelines as circumstances dictate.

These Interim Guidelines address the manner in which the Board will conduct its public meetings to comply with recommended COVID-19 safety guidance and protocols.

COVID-19 Safety Protocols

Board meetings will adhere to CPS policy on COVID-19 safety guidance and protocols to keep families, staff, and our community safe from COVID-19. Please note the following updates to COVID-19 safety protocols:

- Board meetings are now mask-optional. While the Board continues to encourage the use of masks, Board meeting participants who attend in-person will now have a choice about whether or not to wear a mask during the Board meeting. This model has been deemed safe by federal, state, and local public health authorities for areas where community transmission of COVID-19 is low, like Chicago.
- All other COVID-19 safety guidance and protocols for in-person participation are still in effect, including six-feet social distancing and in-person attendees must review the questions on the [CPS Self-Screener](#) prior to arrival.
- Due to capacity limits and the need to accommodate six-feet social distance, observers will not be invited into the designated meeting location. Observers and members of the general public are invited to view the Board meeting live-stream at cpsboe.org.

Speaker Sign Up and Equity of Voice

Members of the public, employees of the district, Local School Council members and members of other groups wishing to speak must register in advance of the day of the meeting or by such other time noted in the meeting agenda published by the Board. Unless otherwise noted in the notice for the Board meeting, Advance Speaker Registration will open the Monday preceding the Board meeting at 10:30 a.m. and close Tuesday at 5:00 p.m., or until all slots are filled. Advance registration during this period is available by the following methods:

Online: www.cpsboe.org (recommended)
Phone: (773) 553-1600

To ensure equity of access to address the Board, an individual may not speak at two (2) consecutive Regular Board meetings. In the event an individual registers to speak at a consecutive Regular Board meeting, the individual will not be called to address the Board. Speakers called by the Board Secretary may not cede their time to another person. We thank you for your cooperation in helping to ensure all voices are heard at Board meetings.

Number of Speakers

The Board will allocate no more than 30 speaking slots to members of the general public to speak to the Board. Speakers who registered via the Advance Registration process will have the option to attend in person at the location of the Board meeting or via electronic/telephonic means. Registered speakers will receive instructions for Board meeting participation. Each speaker will be allocated up to two (2) minutes to speak.

Observing the Board Meeting

Members of the public may view the Board meeting via live stream by selecting “Watch live” on the Board’s website at www.cpsboe.org. At this time, due to capacity limits and the need to accommodate six-feet social distance, observers will not be invited into the designated meeting location from which each or any of the Board members are participating in the meeting.

Public Officials

City, State and Federal public officials may request speaker time by contacting the Department of Intergovernmental Affairs at 773-553-2655. The Board Secretary at the discretion of the President may call City, State and Federal officials to speak at any time as appropriate.

Interpreters

An interpreter will be provided for those speakers who wish to make their remarks in Spanish. Speakers who wish to make their remarks in a language other than English or Spanish must notify the Board Office at least two (2) business days prior to the Board meeting to request an interpreter.

Accommodations

Individuals with a physical impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activity who require an accommodation, auxiliary aid and/or other services to participate in a Board meeting must notify the Board Office at (773) 553-1600 at least two (2) business days prior to the meeting to request the accommodation, auxiliary aid and/or other service. Sign language interpretation is available upon request without prior notice.

Order of Speakers

The Board Secretary may group speakers according to a particular topic and may call certain speakers out of numerical order so that all comments regarding a particular topic may be heard together. Speakers called by the Board Secretary may not cede their time to another person. We thank you for your cooperation in helping to ensure all voices are heard at Board meetings.

Speaker Remarks and Submissions

When called by the Board Secretary, speakers will have two (2) minutes to present their remarks and materials to the Board. Speakers must end their presentation upon the request of the Board Secretary when their time is up to allow the next speaker to begin. All public presentations must be limited to issues of concern before the Board and/or related to the Chicago Public Schools. Comments of a personal nature directed towards individual Board members, employees of the Board or any other individual are not permitted. It is the meeting chair's prerogative to limit the discussion of any speaker to allow for broad and diverse public participation.

Written Comments

Registered speakers and any member of the general public may submit written comments by completing the Written Comments Form on the Board's website at www.cpsboe.org or US Mail to 1 N. Dearborn, Suite 950, Chicago IL 60602. Unless otherwise noted in the public notice for the Board meeting, written comments must be submitted between the posting of the Board meeting agenda and 5 p.m. the day after the Board meeting for consideration by Board members and inclusion in the meeting proceedings.

Behavior

Courteous, respectful and civil behavior is expected from all speakers and all persons attending a Board meeting. Comments of a personal nature directed towards individual Board members, employees of the Board or any other individual are not permitted. It is the meeting chair's prerogative to limit the discussion of any speaker to allow for broad and diverse public participation. Unsolicited comments and disruptive behavior are prohibited. Individuals who are disruptive may be given a warning and also, may, if necessary, be removed from the meeting. If any individual is removed from a meeting as a result of disruptive behavior, then the individual may forfeit their right of reentry to future Board meetings.

Restrictions

Current or prospective vendors wishing to present products or services for purchase should not use the public participation portion of a Board meeting for this purpose. Hand-held posters and placards are not allowed in the Board Room.

Recordings

The Board records the public participation portion of each Board meeting. The Board reserves the right to edit any and all portions of the recording from each monthly meeting. These recordings are aired on local cable channels for the convenience of the public. Members of the public can copy any portion of the public participation or business portion of the meeting from the televised broadcast or from www.cpsboe.org.

Media

An area of the Board Room will be designated for members of the media who wish to cover the Board meeting. This number will be limited in order to accommodate as many public participants as possible. Guidelines and requirements for media access to Board meetings are issued by the Office of Communications.