



City of Chicago Board of Education



Guidelines for Public
Participation at Board of
Education Meetings



Guidelines for Public Participation at Board of Education Meetings

These Guidelines are designed to ensure a fair and organized process for public participation at the Board of Education of the City of Chicago (“Board”) meetings. Below are details on how to register to speak, observe meetings, and other important information.

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General Information

Observing the Meeting

1. Watching Online:

- Members of the public, employees of the District, Local School Council members, and members of other groups may view the meeting live by selecting “Watch live” on the Board’s website at www.cpsboe.org.

2. In-Person Observer Attendance:

- To attend in person, you must register in advance to assure your seat. Registration opens 48 hours before a meeting.
- There are 100 observer slots available for advance observer registration.
- If advance registration is full or has closed, same-day, in-person observer registration is also available. You can still register on the day of the meeting in person, starting at 10:15 a.m. for Wednesday Committee meetings, and 10:15 a.m. for Thursday Board meetings, on a first-come, first-serve basis.
- Same-day, in-person registration begins at 10:15 a.m. the day of the Committee meeting and 10:15 a.m. on the day of the Board meeting in the lobby at 42 W. Madison (unless the location or time is otherwise indicated). Please be aware that same-day, in-person observer registration is taken on a first-come, first-serve basis, and registrations will be taken as open seats are available.

3. How to Register:

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

Accommodations - Accessibility

All meeting locations are ADA and generally accessible in consideration of those with disabilities.

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.



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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.

Speaker Registration and Participation

1. Advance Speaker Registration Open Period:

- Unless otherwise noted in the notice for the Board meeting, the Advance Speaker Registration opens 48 hours before the meeting. This usually means registration opens at 10:30 a.m. on the Monday before a Wednesday Committee meeting and at 10:30 a.m. on the Tuesday before a Thursday Regular Board meeting.
- The Advance Registration Open Period will remain open for 24 hours.

2. How to Register:

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

3. Randomized Lottery for Speaker Selection:

In order to provide more equity of voice during the public participation segment, a randomized lottery will be conducted to select speakers for any meeting where the number of registered speakers exceeds the number of slots available.

- **Randomized Selection:** During a 24 hour registration period, anyone interested in speaking can sign up. After this time, a lottery will randomly select a set number of speakers from those who registered. For example, if 100 people register, the lottery might select 30 people to speak. This process gives everyone a fair chance to address the Board.
- **Number of Speakers:** The Board will allocate no more than 30 speaking slots to members of the general public to speak to the Board.
- **Notifications:** After the lottery, you will receive an email confirming whether or not you have been selected to speak. Instructions for participating in the meeting will also be provided.
- **Applicability:** The randomized lottery applies to all Board meetings where advanced registration is available. This system will not only apply to Board Meetings, but also to other meetings where advanced registration is available, such as Committee meetings and Hearings.

4. Participation:

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.



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- 5. Limitations on Speaking:** To maintain a fair chance for speakers to address the Board, individuals may not speak at back-to-back meetings and may not speak at more than one meeting per month, with the exception noted below if less than the allotted number of speakers register.
- If an individual registers for back-to-back meetings and/or more than one meeting per month, they will not be included for that meeting's lottery. This ensures more opportunities for the public to equitably address the Board.
 - However, if less than the allotted number of speakers register for a meeting, the limitation on speaking at consecutive meetings and/or more than once within a month will not apply, and those previously ineligible to speak will be reinstated in the lottery and may be eligible to speak.
 - Speakers may not cede their time to another person.
- 6. Speaker Remarks and Submissions:**
- Each speaker is given 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.
 - To comply with Chicago Municipal Code Chapter 15-4-880, which prohibits obstructions in exit ways, aisles, and passageways of public spaces to ensure safe and timely evacuation, the following guidelines will be enforced:
 - i. A maximum of 10 persons may stand with a speaker (5 on each side of the podium), and they must remain within the designated floor markings along the glass partition. All other aisles, walkways, and exits must be kept clear at all times. Obstruction of these areas is prohibited and may impede emergency response.
 - 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, unrelated to the operations of Board or CPS, 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.
 - All speakers must adhere to the [Behavior Expectations](#) in the following section.
- 7. 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.



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To ensure fairness to all participants, speakers not present when their segment begins will not be called upon after that segment has concluded.

Special Considerations

1. Union Representatives and Elected Public Officials:

- Union representatives who are executive officers of Unions may address the board.
- Elected city, state, and federal public officials may request to speak by contacting the Department of Intergovernmental Affairs at IGA@cps.edu.
- Each union representative or elected public official is given five (5) minutes to present their remarks.
- Union representatives and elected public officials may not cede their time to another person.
- To ensure fairness to all participants, speakers not present when their segment begins will not be called upon after that segment has concluded.
- To comply with Chicago Municipal Code Chapter 15-4-880, which prohibits obstructions in exit ways, aisles, and passageways of public spaces to ensure safe and timely evacuation, the following guidelines will be enforced:
 - i. A maximum of 10 persons may stand with a speaker (5 on each side of the podium), and they must remain within the designated floor markings along the glass partition. All other aisles, walkways, and exits must be kept clear at all times. Obstruction of these areas is prohibited and may impede emergency response.

2. Interpreters:

- An interpreter will be provided for those speakers who wish to make their remarks in Spanish, and Spanish-language interpreters are available. If you need an interpreter for a different language, please notify the Board Office at least two (2) business days before the meeting.
- While speakers may choose to address the Board in Spanish, they will need to provide a written version of their statement the day prior to the meeting if they wish to have it translated into English during the meeting. Speakers who do not provide their statement in advance may still address the Board, but their statement will be translated and shared with Board Members at a later time.



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3. Behavior Expectations:

- The Board values and welcomes courteous, respectful, and civil behavior from all speakers and all persons attending a Board meeting. The Board expects speakers to limit statements to those relating to the operations of the Board or CPS, and refrain from comments of a personal nature, unrelated to the operations of the Board and CPS. It is the meeting chair's prerogative to limit the discussion of any speaker to allow for broad and diverse public participation.
- Profane language, unsolicited comments, and disruptive behavior are prohibited. Individuals who are disruptive may be given a warning and may also be removed from the meeting, if necessary. If any individual is removed from a meeting as a result of disruptive behavior, the individual may forfeit their right of reentry to future Board meetings.

Written Comments and Other Participation

1. Submitting Written Comments:

- Even if you are not selected to speak during Public Participation, you can submit written comments. Complete the Written Comments Form on the Board's website or send your comments by mail to 42 West Madison Street, Garden Level, 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.

2. Media and 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.
- An area of the Board Room will be designated for members of the media who wish to cover the Board meeting. This number may 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.

3. Spanish Language Interpretation and Captioning:

- To enhance accessibility, the Board is committed to implementing Spanish interpretation for online viewers and Spanish captioning for archived content as soon as practically possible.