

# ICCTA

Illinois Community College Trustees Association

## **QUICK SURVEY RESULTS** **Public Comments at Board Meetings**

January 25, 2022

*A total of 26 colleges/districts responded to ICCTA's Quick Survey on PUBLIC COMMENTS AT BOARD MEETINGS.*

### HIGHLIGHTS:

- ❖ More than half of colleges limit public comments to 3 minutes per speaker
- ❖ Several colleges provide the board chair with the discretion to extend or shorten speaking time
- ❖ The majority of colleges require advance notice of public comments, with notification deadlines ranging from 10 days to immediately before the start of the board meeting
- ❖ Click [HERE](#) for a compilation of current board policies/procedures on public comments

### 1. HOW LONG DOES YOUR BOARD ALLOW FOR PUBLIC COMMENTS AT BOARD MEETINGS?

#### **2 minutes per speaker**

**Spoon River:** Two minutes. If a person desires more than two minutes, a written request is required to be sent to the President at least twenty-four hours prior to the meeting.

#### **3 minutes per speaker**

**Black Hawk:** 3 Minutes, but if requested, additional time may be granted by the board chair.

**City Colleges:** 3 (three) minutes

**DuPage:** Three minutes per person. There is no cap on the total length of time of all people requesting to make a comment to the board.

**Elgin:** 3 minutes

**Harper:** The time limit is three minutes per speaker is noted in the policy; the Board Chair also reserves the right to establish reasonable time constraints for public comments.

**Highland:** Three minutes.

**Illinois Valley:** Presentations during public comment by any one individual shall be limited to three minutes. The maximum amount of time which will be provided for public comment at any one meeting shall be 15 minutes. It shall be the discretion of the Board if after 15 minutes, more time shall be allowed for public comment. It shall be the option of the Board Chair to halt presentations which repeat points already addressed or are not per the rules herein established.

**Kankakee:** Each speaker is given three (3) minutes for public comment.

**Kishwaukee:** 3 Minutes

**Lake County:** 45-minute maximum is allotted for the entirety of the public participation section of the agenda, which may be extended at the discretion of the Board Chairperson

- Ordinarily, the time for any one person to address the Board during public participation shall be limited to 3 minutes
- In unusual circumstances, and when an individual has made a request to speak for a longer period of time, the person may be allowed to speak for more than 3 minutes.
- When necessary and appropriate, the shortening of the time for each person to address the Board during public participation to conserve time and give the maximum number of people an opportunity to speak.

**Lake Land:** Our Board Policy states we will ordinarily limit individual comments to 3 minutes.

**Morton:** 3 minutes.

**Oakton:** Statements are limited to three (3) minutes per participant.

**Triton:** No overall time limit. 3 minutes per individual.

### **5 minutes per speaker**

**Danville:** Five minutes

**Heartland:** Five minutes per individual, and more than five minutes per individual if it is a formal presentation requiring more than five minutes.

**Illinois Eastern:** 5 minutes

**John Wood:** At each regular and special meeting of the Board of Trustees which is open to the public, members of the public and employees of the Community College District are to be afforded time, subject to reasonable constraints, to comment to or ask questions of the Board. 110 ILCS 805

Any person desiring to address, comment to or ask questions of the Board is required to file a written request with the President at least twenty-four (24) hours prior to the commencement of the meeting at which the person seeks to address the Board, setting forth with reasonable particularity the matter or matters to be discussed. Members are expected to comport themselves in a respectful, civil, and appropriate manner. At any meeting, the Board may impose such reasonable constraints on the comment period as shall be deemed appropriate under the circumstances. In general, however, the Board will limit any presentation by a person or group of persons presenting like comments or questions to five (5) minutes and the total time for all comments or questions at a meeting to a total of fifteen (15) minutes reasonably apportioned by the Chair among those desiring to address the Board. Where a matter is raised that would be appropriate for closed session the Board may vote to have the presentation in closed session.

**Joliet:** Five minutes per speaker and 20 minutes per topic.

**Lincoln Land:** The amount of time allotted for an item shall not exceed 15 minutes, and the amount of time allotted to any individual shall not exceed 5 minutes.

**Southeastern:** Presentations by one (1) individual shall be limited to five (5) minutes.

### **Varied time limit per speaker**

**Sauk Valley:** See attached policy; time allowed depends upon whether or not prior notice was given.

### **No time limit**

**Kaskaskia:** We generally allow all individuals to speak as long as they are professional and not abusive/threatening in any way. Only once in the past four years has anyone had to be cut off due to accusatory/threatening behavior.

**Sandburg:** Usually each person would get about 5-10 minutes.

## **2. IS THE TIME BASED ON TOPIC OR TOTAL TIME?**

**Black Hawk:** No

**City Colleges:** No

**Danville:** Per speaker. On a single subject matter, the limit is 20 minutes for all speakers.

**DuPage:** Three minutes per speaker.

**Elgin:** Depending on the topic; an allowance of additional time may and usually does occur

**Harper:** The established time is for each speaker; however, the Board Chair may establish reasonable time constraints as needed.

**Heartland:** Total Time.

**Highland:** Total time

**Illinois Eastern:** Total time

**Illinois Valley:** Presentations during public comment by any one individual shall be limited to three minutes. The maximum amount of time which will be provided for public comment at any one meeting shall be 15 minutes. It shall be the discretion of the Board if after 15 minutes, more time shall be allowed for public comment. It shall be the option of the Board Chair to halt presentations which repeat points already addressed or are not per the rules herein established.

**John Wood:** We focus more on the time than the topic to be consistent and fair to all but are flexible.

**Joliet:** Five minutes per speaker and 20 minutes per topic

**Kankakee:** The public comment portion of the meeting is limited to twenty (20) minutes per topic and forty-five (45) minutes overall.

**Kaskaskia:** N/A

**Kishwaukee:** Total Time

**Lake County:** 3 minutes per individual and no more than 45 minutes per topic. However, Board Chair can modify dependent on situation.

**Lake Land:** The time is based on an individual, but if several individuals are comments on the same topics then we reserve the right to limit total number of speakers. Our policy language follows: Ordinarily individual comments shall be limited to three (3) minutes. The Board Chairperson may extend this time if he/she feels it is in the best interest of the public. The Board Chairperson reserves the right to limit the number of individuals or groups who will be recognized to speak.

**Lincoln Land:** The amount of time allotted for an item shall not exceed 15 minutes, and the amount of time allotted to any individual shall not exceed 5 minutes.

**Morton:** The time based is total time.

**Oakton:** Each speaker is allotted 3 minutes

**Sandburg:** The time is based off of topic. We typically give 5-10 minutes per person depending on the topic being addressed, some topics may get more. (We don't typically have a large number of requests. Maybe 1 person every few months)

**Sauk Valley:** Varies -- see attached policy

**Southeastern:** If the topic is related to a Board agenda item, the individual giving the presentation will be asked to speak on the same topic. Each must speak consecutively and each individual's presentation will be limited to five (5) minutes. The Chair shall have the option of halting presentations which repeat points already presented.

**Spoon River:** Topic. Total time is 15 minutes.

**Triton:** N/A

### 3. WHAT IS YOUR PROCESS AND NOTIFICATION DEADLINE FOR REQUESTING TIME FOR PUBLIC COMMENTS?

#### Advance notice required

**City Colleges:** Any person who so desires to address the Board concerning any item on the agenda or any other matter, shall submit a written request at least twenty-four (24) hours before the Board meeting at which he or she wishes to speak.

**DuPage:** For our meetings currently while in a hybrid mode (in-person and virtual) we encourage members of the public who are speaking online to sign up at least an hour before the meeting begins. For members of the public who are speaking in-person, they may sign-up to speak up until the start of the meeting. The deadline for online speakers is listed on the agenda that is posted per the Open Meetings Act.

**Elgin:** We state on the agenda: Anyone wishing to provide public comment is welcome to do so at the appropriate time on the agenda. Written comments can be sent to [dkerruish@elgin.edu](mailto:dkerruish@elgin.edu) in advance of the meeting by xxx p.m. (an hour before the meeting start time -- this started when we went virtual).

**Harper:** Notification deadlines are only used if the meeting is being held remotely. If this is the case, email submissions must be made by 3 p.m. on the day of the Board meeting and are read by the Board Chair. This is noted on the published agenda. If the meeting is held in person, the speaker signs in before the meeting begins. During the Public Comments period, the Chair acknowledges those who have signed in and the speaker addresses the Board directly.

**Heartland:** For a five minute comment, submit a written request to the Board Secretary not less than 20 minutes before the meeting starts; forms are available in the meeting room. For more than five minutes, submit a written request to the Chair, Secretary or President at least 5 working days prior to the meeting.

**Illinois Valley:** Groups or individuals who desire to have a specific topic placed on the agenda shall submit a written request at least 10 days prior to the public Board meeting to the attention of the President. Such request shall explain the topic and provide rationale for the topic to be placed on the agenda.

**John Wood:** Any person desiring to address, comment to or ask questions of the Board is required to file a written request with the President at least twenty-four (24) hours prior to the commencement of the meeting at which the person seeks to address the Board, setting forth with reasonable particularity the matter or matters to be discussed

**Joliet:** Individuals interested in speaking to the Board with regard to a listed agenda item must complete a "Board Address Request" card available at the entrance to the meeting and submit it to the Secretary for the Board prior to the start of the meeting.

**Kishwaukee:** Individuals wishing to address the Board during the public comment section of the agenda will need to complete the required sign in sheet (available prior to the meeting in the Founder's Boardroom) with the requested information.

**Lake County:** The process and deadline is noted in the front page of the Board agenda. December meeting agenda example below:

The Board of Trustees of Community College District No. 532, Lake County, Illinois, will convene a regular meeting on Tuesday, December 14, 2021, at 6:00 PM, in Room A011, 19351 W. Washington St., Grayslake, Illinois. This meeting will be in person. For purposes of convenience or for those who do not wish to attend the meeting in-person, the College will live stream the meeting via You Tube at: <https://youtu.be/ABXtfY3LeUw>.

Members of the public will be offered an opportunity to address the Board during the public comment portion of the meeting. Board Policy 124.1, Public Participation, which can be found in the College of Lake County Policy Manual, sets forth the College's guidelines for public comment. Members of the public who wish to address the Board in-person must provide their name via email to [president@clcillinois.edu](mailto:president@clcillinois.edu) by 3:00 PM on the date of the meeting. Individuals will be called to the podium when it is their time to address the Board.

All individuals attending the Board meeting in person must follow the COVID-19 protocols established by the College at the time and date of the meeting. Note that face coverings are currently required when indoors at the College, regardless of vaccination status. If you do not wish to wear a face covering, you can access the meeting via the You Tube livestream link above. Individuals entering any College building or facility are representing to the College that they are not experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms and that they are not under a quarantine protocol related to COVID-19.

**Lincoln Land:** Any organization or individual may address the Board in person during such portion of each regular meeting reserved for the hearing of citizens. Unless otherwise authorized by the Chair, public comment shall be limited to items on the meeting agenda. The amount of time allotted for an item shall not exceed 15 minutes, and the amount of time allotted to any individual shall not exceed 5 minutes.

Any member of the public wishing to address the Board in respect to a non-agenda item must present a written request to the President's Office at least 48 hours in advance (excluding weekends and holidays) of the meeting at which the address is proposed. Such request must provide a brief summary of the matter to be presented and the name or names of the persons who expect to appear. Upon receipt, the President's Office shall transmit such information to the Board Chair. The Board Chair may reject any request reasonably determined to be unrelated to College business or Board duties and responsibilities. In the event of rejection, the requesting party may present comments in writing to the President's Office, and such comments shall then be promptly transmitted to the President and all Board members.

**Oakton:** Individuals who wish to address the Board of Trustees during the Public Participation portion of the meeting should send an email to the Special Assistant to the Board of Trustees including their name, town/affiliation, and the item they wish to address to the Board, no later than 6 p.m. on meeting days. That's the time our meetings start.

**Sandburg:** If you would like to address the Board, a request must be submitted 24 hours before the Board meeting. I have a form I usually fill out with Date, Name, Telephone, Topic. One spokesperson is allowed to speak to the Board. The Board reserves the right to determine the amount of time for any and all public comments. The Board does not obligate itself to receive or act upon new items introduced.

(Posted on the Board Agenda: *Those interested in speaking to the Board under Items from the Floor must contact the President's Office 24 hours prior to the meeting for details regarding their presentation.*)

**Southeastern:** Individual(s) or groups who desire to speak to the Board are encouraged to submit a written request to the President's Office at least ten (10) days prior to a Board meeting. Requests which are not submitted ten (10) days or more before the Board meeting shall be directed to the Chair of the Board prior to the Board meeting.

**Spoon River:** During a meeting, anyone requesting to address the Board is provided limited time not to exceed two minutes. Anyone wishing to address, comment to or ask questions of the Board and desiring more than two minutes is required to file a written request to do so with the President at least twenty-four hours prior to the meeting at which the person seeks to address the Board.

**Triton:** Citizen Participation sign-up forms are available at the Boardroom prior to each meeting with a notice of the deadline to submit being 30 minutes prior to the posted meeting time. Individuals are required to complete the form which includes their name, affiliation, and topic they wish to address, and submit to the officer on duty at the Boardroom.

When meetings were held remotely, individuals submitted their information via email to the Board Secretary with a deadline of 30 minutes prior to the posted meeting time.

#### **No advance notice required**

**Black Hawk:** Anyone who wishes to address the Board under the Public Comment Section of the agenda shall make a written request of the Chair or of the Secretary of the Board prior to the beginning of the meeting. Such written request may be conveyed through the President's Office. (Board Policy 10.44.4)

ALSO, we have a public comment sign-up sheet at each meeting so if someone hasn't notified us in advance they wish to address the board, they can still do so at the meeting.

**Danville:** No deadline

**Highland:** We have no formal process or deadline.

**Illinois Eastern:** There is an item line on the agenda for public comments and the board chair asks for any public comments before moving forward -- no notification deadline.

**Kankakee:** The opportunity for public comment is listed on the meeting agenda, which is posted on campus and the college's website forty-eight (48) business hours prior to the meeting. After calling the meeting to order, the Board Chair asks for public comments.

**Kaskaskia:** At this time we recognize anyone who wishes to provide public comment and do not require advance notice.

**Lake Land:** We have no notification deadline. People may ask to speak to address the board simply to coming to the meeting and waiting to speak when we announce the public comment agenda item.

**Morton:** The Chairman of the Board makes an announcement after roll call during monthly board meetings for public comment.

**Sauk Valley:** See attached policy.

**4. IF YOUR BOARD HAS ADOPTED A POLICY ON PUBLIC COMMENTS AT BOARD MEETINGS, PLEASE ATTACH A COPY TO YOUR SURVEY RESPONSE.**

**Board policy in place**

Click [HERE](#) for a compilation of current board policies/procedures on public comments from Black Hawk, Danville, DuPage, Elgin, Harper, Heartland, Illinois Eastern, Illinois Valley, John Wood, Joliet, Kankakee, Kishwaukee, Lake County, Lake Land, Lincoln Land, Morton, Sandburg, Sauk Valley, Southeastern, Spoon River, and Triton

**No policy has been adopted**

**Highland:** We have no formal process or deadline.

**Kaskaskia:** At this time we do not have a specific policy but we do have the following Board Meeting Policy language as identified regarding public comment:

All meetings of the Board shall be open to the public, except for specific exceptions as provided for in the Illinois Open Meetings Act. Members of the public may address the Board at any official meeting in regard to any item on the agenda; however, the Board reserves the right to reasonably limit the time of participation to permit the presentation of all pertinent points of view and information bearing upon a matter before it.

**Oakton:** We don't have a policy related to public comments.

**5. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:**

**Harper:** These are very timely questions. We just updated our policy regarding Public Comments at Board meetings.

**Heartland:** Heartland is in the process of updating the policy manual, and the attachment is the proposed revised policy.

**Illinois Central:** ICC is currently in the process of updating this policy so will not have any new guidelines available to share until sometime in February.

**Kankakee:** Revision to the KCC Board of Trustees Policy Manual, Public Comments (125.04B) was made at the advice of Robbins Schwartz attorneys at a recent ICCTA meeting.

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*For more information, please contact:*

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