

School Board

Public Participation at School Board Meetings and Petitions to the Board¹

For an overall minimum of 30 minutes^{2, d} During each regular and special open meeting of the Board, any person may comment to or ask questions of the School Board (*public participation*), subject to the reasonable constraints established and recorded in this policy's guidelines below.³ *The Board*

Commented [DJ1]: Text that formerly appeared in f/n 2 has been moved to f/n 1.

The footnotes are not intended to be part of the adopted policy; they should be removed before the policy is adopted.

¹ The Open Meetings Act (OMA) requires public bodies to have rules (a policy) on public participation. Public comment is synonymous with public participation. They are used interchangeably in the footnotes below. 5 ILCS 120/. Customize this policy to ensure it is responsive to the community's public participation needs.

OMA and the School Code grant any person the right to address a school board during any open meeting. See 5 ILCS 120/2.06, 105 ILCS 5/10-6 (board of directors), 5/10-16 (board of education), and PAO 19-2. See f/n 2, 4, and 5, and 6 below for more detailed discussions.

Policy 2:110, Qualifications, Term, and Duties of Board Officers, governs the board president's duties, one of which is to preside at all meetings, including presiding over public participation and enforcing this policy. Enforcing this policy is key to the board conducting a successful meeting. The board president should speak with the board attorney to: (1) craft opening statements for the public participation portion of the meeting related to enforcement of this policy and consequences for violating it or any other related board policies, and (2) discuss whether the presence of security and/or law enforcement is advisable, especially when public participation is expected to be long or contentious. For a resource on best practices for managing challenging public comment periods, including a sample opening statement, see: www.iasb.com/policy-services-and-school-law/guidance-and-resources/managing-challenging-public-comment-periods/ and other learning opportunities through IASB's Online Learning Center, at: www.iasb.com/conference-training-and-events/training/online-learning/online-courses/.

While it does not apply directly to school boards, the Empowering Public Participation Act, 5 ILCS 850/, added by P.A. 102-348, prohibits law enforcement agencies or officers employed by them from intentionally conducting background checks of individuals based solely on the fact that they are speaking at an open meeting of a public body. Consult the board attorney for a discussion related to the appropriateness of board members and school officials using search engines and/or other social media platforms to search for information about individuals speaking during public participation.

² OMA and the School Code grant any person the right to address a school board during any open meeting. See 5 ILCS 120/2.06, 105 ILCS 5/10-6 (board of directors), 5/10-16 (board of education), and PAO 19-2. See f/n 4, 5, and 6 below for more detailed discussions.

The length of this sample policy's minimum overall public participation time is at the local board's discretion. Ensure the length of time here and in #3.b. match. Customize this policy to ensure it is responsive to the community's public participation needs.

³ This sentence combines 105 ILCS 5/10-16 and 5 ILCS 120/2.06(g). Prohibiting public comment and/or restricting public comment to written filings violates the mandates and overarching purpose of OMA. *Roxana CUSD No. 1 v. EPA*, 998 N.E.2d 961 (Ill.App.4th 2013).

While some courts have upheld public bodies limiting public comment to certain subjects, such as only subjects on the agenda or only related to the business of the public body, this sample policy does not provide default sample text for limiting public comment to certain subjects. This is because 105 ILCS 5/10-16 requires school boards to allow members of the public "to comment to or ask questions of the board." The cases in which courts upheld limiting public comment to certain subjects involved public bodies with no governing statutes that required the public body to allow the public "to comment to or ask questions of the board."

Consult with the board attorney for guidance before adopting a maximum time limit for public participation; public comment rules are frequently challenged. The Ill. Public Access Counselor (PAC) has issued only unpublished, non-binding opinions approving of 30- and 60-minute overall time limits for public comment under OMA. The PAC has issued a binding opinion finding that a public body violated OMA when, pursuant to an unrecorded rule, it limited public comment on a controversial topic to 15 minutes. Public Access Opinion (PAO) 19-2. The PAC noted that while the lack of an adopted policy on the time period for public comment did not "necessarily mean that public comment must be allowed to continue indefinitely," the public body presented "no evidence that limiting comments was necessary to maintain decorum or that extending the comment period would have unduly interfered with the orderly transaction of public business." Id. If the board wants to establish a maximum time limit for public participation, it may revise the first sentence of the paragraph as follows:

listens to comments or questions during public participation; responses to comments to or questions of the Board are most often managed through policy 3:30, *Chain of Command*.⁴ During public participation, there will be a 20-minute⁵ minimum total length of time for any one subject. When public participation takes less time than these minimums, it shall end.

To preserve sufficient time for the Board to conduct its business, any person appearing before the Board is expected to follow these guidelines:⁶

1. Address the Board only at the appropriate time as indicated on the agenda and when recognized by the Board President. This includes following the directives of the Board President to maintain order and decorum for all.

The footnotes are not intended to be part of the adopted policy; they should be removed before the policy is adopted.

⁴ For a maximum of 60 minutes during each regular and special open meeting of the Board, any person may comment to or ask questions of the School Board (public participation), subject to the reasonable constraints established and recorded in this policy's guidelines below. The time limit for public participation at a meeting may be extended upon the majority vote of the Board members at the regular or special meeting.

If a board wants to establish a time limit other than 60 minutes, substitute with the time limit desired. Note that any extension of a public comment period cannot be based on the viewpoint of a speaker(s).

⁴ The law does not require board members to respond during public participation, and best practices for meetings instruct board members to refrain from engaging in commentary with members of the public during public participation.

⁵ See 5 ILCS 120/2.06, 105 ILCS 5/10-16, and PAO 19-2. Like the length of time for overall public participation discussed in fn 2 above, the length of this sample policy's 20-minute minimum total length of time for any one subject is also at the local board's discretion. Customize this policy to ensure it is responsive to the community's public participation needs. Ensure the length of time here and in #3.b. match. Because the time limit for public participation in this sample policy is set at five minutes, a multiple of five minutes is chosen for ease of tracking. See also the discussion in fns 5 and 6 below.

⁶ OMA does not but PAO 19-2 does provide specific rules. These guidelines may be amended. The guidelines for public comment and the time minimums and limits (if any) should be reviewed with the board attorney. Restrictions on public comment during board meetings must respect free speech rights guaranteed by the First Amendment. Do not use viewpoint-based restrictions on public comment time unless approved by the board attorney. Many decisions address the tension between free speech and rules for public comment during meetings. See, for example:

Mnyofu v. Rich Twp. High Sch. Bd. Dist., 2007 WL 1308523 (N.D.Ill. 2007)(school boards may impose guidelines for running meetings to maintain effectiveness).

PAO 19-2 (the Ill. Public Access Counselor (PAC) ordered a board to refrain from applying unestablished and unrecorded rules to restrict public comment at future meetings stating, "Though a public body has inherent authority to conduct its meetings in an efficient manner and need not allow public comment to continue indefinitely, there was no evidence that capping public comment to 15 minutes was necessary to maintain decorum or that extending the comment period would have unduly interfered with the orderly transaction of public business.").

PAO 21-9 (The PAC found a board violated OMA when it required public comments about retention of a coach to be made in closed, rather than open, session).

Lowery v. Jefferson Co. Bd of Educ., 586 F.3d 427 (6th Cir. 2009)(upheld a rule prohibiting speakers from being frivolous, repetitive, or harassing).

Steinburg v. Chesterfield County Planning Commission, 527 F.3d 377 (4th Cir. 2008), cert. denied (upheld removal of a man from a public meeting for behaving in a hostile manner).

Norse v. City of Santa Cruz, 629 F.3d 966 (9th Cir. 2010)(remanded a decision upholding community member's removal from city council meeting after community member gave a Nazi salute in presiding officer's direction, which is considered as classic viewpoint discrimination for which city council members were not entitled to qualified immunity).

Fairchild v. Liberty Indep. Sch. Bd. Dist., 597 F.3d 747 (5th Cir. 2010)(upheld a policy banning discussion of personnel matters during public comment; the rationale turned, at least in part, on the Texas open meetings law).

Bach v. School Board of the City of Virginia Beach, 139 F.Supp.2d 738 (E.D.Va. 2001)(struck down a rule that prohibited personal attacks during public comments at meetings).

Ison v. Madison Local Sch. Dist. Bd. of Educ., 3 F.4th 887 (6th Cir. 2021)(found a policy prohibiting statements that were personally directed, abusive, or antagonistic constituted viewpoint discrimination in violation of the First Amendment).

1.2. Use a sign-in sheet, if requested. ⁷

2.3. Identify oneself and be brief. Ordinarily, the time for any one person to address the Board during public participation shall be limited to five minutes.⁸ In unusual circumstances, and when an individual has made a request to speak for a longer period of time, the Board President may allow a person may be allowed to speak for more than five minutes. If multiple individuals wish to address the Board on the same subject, the group is encouraged to appoint a spokesperson.

3.4. Observe, when necessary and appropriate, the Board President's authority to:

- a. Shorten ~~ing 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; and/or
- b. Expansion of the overall minimum of 30 minutes for public participation and/or the 20-minute minimum total length of time for any one subject; and/or
- c. b. Determination of procedural matters regarding public participation not otherwise covered in Board policy.

4.5. Conduct oneself with respect and civility toward others and otherwise abide by Board policy 8.30, *Visitors to and Conduct on School Property*.⁹

Petitions or written correspondence to the Board shall be presented to the Board in the next regular Board packet. ¹⁰

The footnotes are not intended to be part of the adopted policy; they should be removed before the policy is adopted.

⁷ Optional. A public commenter cannot be excluded for refusing to provide his or her home address. PAO 14-9. Generally, a board should consult with its attorney regarding the practice of excluding public commenters for reasons relating to the sign-in sheet.

⁸ Time limits for any one person to address the Board during public participation may be adjusted up or down. This sample uses five minutes because it is a frequently used time limit. See I.A. Rana Enterprises, Inc. v. City of Aurora, 630 F.Supp.2d 912 (N.D. Ill. 2009) (finding a three-minute time limit reasonable citing Wright v. Anthony, 733 F.2d 575, 577 (8th Cir. 1984) which upheld a five-minute time limit for individual public comments and holding time limits serve "a significant governmental interest in conserving time and in ensuring that others ha[ve] an opportunity to speak"). Note that the Ill. Municipal Code, which applied to the City of Aurora in I.A. Rana Enterprises, Inc., did not have the same requirements as the School Code to allow members of the public to "comment to or ask questions of the board." I.A. Rana Enterprises, Inc. also predated the 2011 amendments to OMA allowing "[a]ny person an opportunity to address public officials under the rules established and recorded by the public body."

Based upon I.A. Rana Enterprises, Inc., many attorneys agree that speaker time limits should be a minimum of three minutes per person, but some public bodies have successfully implemented two minutes per person. Consult the board attorney before setting time limits below three minutes.

⁹ See Nuding v. Cerro Gordo Community Unit School Dist., 313 Ill. App.3d 344 (4th Dist. 2000) (board was authorized to ban parent from attending all school events and extracurricular activities by 105 ILCS 5/24-24; the ban was based on the parent's exposing a toy gun and a pocketknife at a board meeting).

Initiating lawsuits against citizens over their uncivil public comments is tricky. Always consult the board attorney, and in some instances, a board member may need to consult his or her own private attorney. The Ill. Citizen Participation Act (CPA) (735 ILCS 110/15) provides citizens a mechanism to stop lawsuits brought against them for their public comments. The law, referred to as *anti-SLAPP legislation*, prohibits public officials from suing citizens for "any act or acts in furtherance of [their] rights of petition, speech, association, or to otherwise participate in government." SLAPP means *Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation*.

The CPA does not bar public officials from seeking relief when they can allege that (a) the citizen's comments were "not genuinely aimed at procuring favorable government action, result, or outcome," and/or (b) the citizen engaged in defamation or another intentional tort causing the public official damage. See Sandholm v. Kuecker, 962 N.E.2d 418 (Ill. 2012).

LEGAL REF.: ~~105 ILCS 5/10-6 and 5/10-16.~~
5 ILCS 120/2.06, Open Meetings Act.
~~105 ILCS 5/10-6 and 5/10-16.~~

CROSS REF.: 2:220 (School Board Meeting Procedure), 8:10 (Connection with the Community), 8:30 (Visitors to and Conduct on School Property)

The footnotes are not intended to be part of the adopted policy; they should be removed before the policy is adopted.

¹⁰ A board of school directors must reply to a written request for consideration of a matter within 60 days from the board's receipt of the request. 105 ILCS 5/10-6. Boards of education may treat petitions or correspondence according to a uniform, locally developed process, e.g., a board may wish to limit petitions and written correspondence presented to the board to those that are received at the district office via mail or hand delivery.

School Board

Qualifications, Term, and Duties of Board Officers 1

The School Board officers are: President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer.² These officers are elected or appointed by the Board at its organizational meeting.

President 3

The Board elects a President from its members for a two-year term. The duties of the President are to:

1. Preside at all meetings;
2. Focus the Board meeting agendas on appropriate content;
3. Make all Board committee appointments, unless specifically stated otherwise; ⁴
4. Attend and observe any Board committee meeting at his or her discretion; ⁵
5. Represent the Board on other boards or agencies;
6. Sign official District documents requiring the President's signature, including Board minutes and Certificate of Tax Levy;
7. Call special meetings of the Board;
8. Serve as the head of the public body for purposes of the Open Meetings Act and Freedom of Information Act; ⁶
9. Ensure that a quorum of the Board is physically present at all Board meetings except as otherwise provided by the Open Meetings Act; ⁷

The footnotes are not intended to be part of the adopted policy; they should be removed before the policy is adopted.

¹ State law controls this policy's content. Selection of officers must be in open session. 5 ILCS 120/2. Board officer vacancies are discussed in *Answers to FAQs: Vacancies on the Board of Education*, Ill. Council of School Attorneys, www.iasb.com/law/vacancies.cfm.

² Districts governed by a board of directors have three officers: a president, clerk, and treasurer. The president and clerk must be board members. 105 ILCS 5/10-5. While there is no prohibition on a board member simultaneously serving in two officer positions, doing so may create either the appearance of impropriety or a compliance issue for purposes of fraud protocols. Consult the board attorney for further guidance and/or request that the board member consult his or her own attorney.

³ 105 ILCS 5/10-13. The board by resolution may decrease to one year the term of office for the president.

Of the listed duties, only the following are imposed by law: #1, preside at meetings (Id.); #6, sign minutes (105 ILCS 5/10-7) and sign certificate of tax levy (105 ILCS 5/17-11); #7, call special meetings (105 ILCS 5/10-16); and #8, serve as *head of the public body* for the Open Meetings Act (OMA) and the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) purposes (5 ILCS 120(7)(e) and 140/2(e), ~~140/7(f), and 140/9.5~~).

⁴ Alternatively, strike the "unless" clause and substitute: "subject to Board approval." Be sure this treatment is consistent with policy 2:150, *Committees*.

⁵ Optional. A board that wants the president to participate in committee meetings may use the following alternative: "Be a member of all Board committees." Using this alternative, the president would be counted to determine the number of members that constitutes a quorum for each board committee meeting. If a board would like the superintendent to attend any or all meetings of a board committee, it should consider asking the superintendent to be a committee resource person (or other such title) rather than an ex-officio member of the board committee itself. That way, the superintendent will not count to determine the number of committee members that constitutes a quorum.

⁶ The *head of the public body* or its attorney may request an advisory opinion from the Ill. Attorney General Public Access Counselor (PAC) concerning compliance with OMA or FOIA. 5 ILCS 120/3.5(h) and 5 ILCS 140/9.5(h). FOIA defines *head of the public body* to mean *president* or "such person's duly authorized designee." 5 ILCS 140/2(e). Preliminary drafts, recommendations, and other records in which opinions are expressed, or policies are formulated, lose this exemption from disclosure if a relevant portion of a requested record is publicly cited and identified by the *head of the public body*. 5 ILCS 140/7(~~1~~)(f).

⁷ Optional. Requiring the president to monitor the presence of a quorum assists compliance with OMA's mandate that a quorum be physically present at all board meetings. except as otherwise provided by OMA. 5 ILCS 120/7, amended by P.A. 101-640.

10. Administer the oath of office to new Board members; **8**
11. Serve as or appoint the Board's official spokesperson to the media; **and**
12. Except when the Board President is the subject of a complaint of sexual harassment, a witness, or otherwise conflicted, appoint a qualified outside investigator to conduct an independent review of allegations of sexual harassment made against a Board member by another Board member or elected official; **and 9**
13. Ensure that the fingerprint-based criminal history records information checks and/or screenings required by State law and policy 5:30, *Hiring Process and Criteria*, are completed for the Superintendent. **10**

The President is permitted to participate in all Board meetings in a manner equal to all other Board members, including the ability to make and second motions.

The Vice President fills a vacancy in the Presidency. **11**

Vice President 12

The Board elects a Vice President from its members for a two-year term. The Vice President performs the duties of the President if:

1. The office of President is vacant;
2. The President is absent; or
3. The President is unable to perform the office's duties.

A vacancy in the Vice Presidency is filled by a special Board election.

Secretary 13

The Board elects a Secretary for a two-year term. The Secretary may be, but is not required to be, a Board member. The Secretary may receive reasonable compensation as determined by the Board before appointment. However, if the Secretary is a Board member, the compensation shall not exceed \$500

The footnotes are not intended to be part of the adopted policy; they should be removed before the policy is adopted.

8 Optional. Omit this duty if policy 2:80, *Board Member Oath and Conduct*, provides that the board member oath is given by other means.

9 See policy 2:105, *Ethics and Gift Ban, Complaints of Sexual Harassment Made Against Board Members by Elected Officials* subhead. 5 ILCS 430/70-5, amended by P.A. 101-221, requires school districts to amend their sexual harassment policies "to provide for a mechanism for reporting and independent review of allegations of sexual harassment made against an elected official of the governmental unit by another elected official of a governmental unit." If the board has chosen to have the Superintendent appoint an outside investigator in these cases (see 2:105, *Ethics and Gift Ban*, at f/n 12⁺), remove item 12 from the list of board president duties and delete the Cross Reference to 2:105, *Ethics and Gift Ban*.

10 See the subhead entitled Screening in sample policy 4:175, *Convicted Child Sex Offender: Screening; Notifications, and f/n 12 of policy 5:30, *Hiring Process and Criteria*.*

11 105 ILCS 5/10-13.1 states that the "vice-president shall perform the duties of the president if there is a vacancy in the office of president or in case of the president's absence or inability to act" However, an earlier enacted statute calls for the appointment of a *president pro tempore* if the president is absent from any meeting or refuses to perform his or her duties, and specifies that the "vice-president, if the board elects such officer, shall be appointed the president pro tempore." 105 ILCS 5/10-13. This policy resolves any confusion by implementing the latter enacted statute and stating that the vice president fills a vacancy in the presidency.

12 105 ILCS 5/10-13.1. The board by resolution may decrease to one year the term of office for the vice president.

13 105 ILCS 5/10-14. The board by resolution may decrease to one year the term of office for the secretary. In districts governed by a board of directors, a clerk who is a board member performs these duties. 105 ILCS 5/10-5. The policy's provisions regarding compensation are required by 105 ILCS 5/10-14 (governs secretaries who are board members and non-board members) and by 50 ILCS 145/2 (governs secretaries who are board members).

Of the listed duties, only the following are imposed by law: #1, board meeting minutes (105 ILCS 5/10-7; see policy 2:220, *School Board Meeting Procedure*, for the requirements for minutes); #3, records board's official acts and submits them to the treasurer (105 ILCS 5/10-7); #4, treasurer's report (105 ILCS 5/10-8); #5, local election official (see f/n 2 and 7 of policy 2:30, *School District Elections*); #6, public inspection of the budget (105 ILCS 5/17-1).

Use this alternative for districts in suburban Cook County: replace "Regional Superintendent" in item #4 with "appropriate Intermediate Service Center."

per year, as fixed by the Board at least 180 days before the beginning of the term.¹⁴ The duties of the Secretary are to:

1. Keep minutes for all Board meetings, and keep the verbatim record for all closed Board meetings;
2. Mail meeting notification and agenda to news media who have officially requested copies;
3. Keep records of the Board's official acts, and sign them, along with the President, before submitting them to the Treasurer at such times as the Treasurer may require;
4. Report to the Treasurer on or before July 7, annually, such information as the Treasurer is required to include in the Treasurer's report to the Regional Superintendent;
5. Act as the local election official for the District;
6. Arrange public inspection of the budget before adoption;
7. Publish required notices;
8. Sign official District documents requiring the Secretary's signature; and
9. Maintain Board policy and such other official documents as directed by the Board.

The Secretary may delegate some or all of these duties, except when State law prohibits the delegation. The Board appoints a secretary pro tempore, who may or may not be a Board member, if the Secretary is absent from any meeting or refuses to perform the duties of the office. A permanent vacancy in the office of Secretary is filled by special Board election.

Recording Secretary 15

The Board may appoint a Recording Secretary who is a staff member. The Recording Secretary shall:

1. Assist the Secretary by taking the minutes for all open Board meetings;
2. Assemble Board meeting material and provide it, along with prior meeting minutes, to Board members before the next meeting; and
3. Perform the Secretary's duties, as assigned, except when State law prohibits the delegation.

In addition, the Recording Secretary or Superintendent receives notification from Board members who desire to attend a Board meeting by video or audio means. ¹⁶

Treasurer 17

The Treasurer of the Board shall be either a member of the Board who serves a one-year term or a non-Board member who serves at the Board's pleasure.¹⁸ A Treasurer who is a Board member may not be

The footnotes are not intended to be part of the adopted policy; they should be removed before the policy is adopted.

¹⁴ 105 ILCS 5/10-14 and 50 ILCS 145/2.

¹⁵ This section is optional.

¹⁶ To allow attendance by video or audio means, a board must adopt policy language conforming to the restrictions in OMA. 5 ILCS 120/2.01 and 120/7, both amended by P.A. 101-640. See subhead **Quorum and Participation by Audio or Video Means** in policy 2:220, *School Board Meeting Procedure*, and its f/n 31.

¹⁷ This section is for: (1) districts in a Class I county (all counties except Cook Co.), or (2) a Class II county (Cook Co.) district that has withdrawn from the authority of the township treasurer or is located in a township in which the office of township treasurer was abolished. 105 ILCS 5/5-1 defines Class I county school units as districts in counties with less than 2,000,000 inhabitants. Those districts in Cook County (Class II county) under the authority of the trustees of schools of the township and the township treasurers should use this alternative: "Qualifications, appointment, and duties of the Treasurer for the School District shall be as provided in the School Code." See 105 ILCS 5/8-1(a) for how the township treasurer is appointed and the term of office; duties are found in 105 ILCS 5/8-2, 5/8-5, 5/8-6, 5/8-7, 5/8-16, and 5/8-17. For districts in a Class II county, in the Legal References insert "5/8-5" before "5/8-6" and insert "5/8-7" after "5/8-6."

¹⁸ 105 ILCS 5/8-1(b). The treasurer's term of office is two years if the district is located in a Class II county (Cook Co.) that was under the jurisdiction and authority of the township treasurer and township trustees of schools at the time those offices were abolished. 105 ILCS 5/8-1(c). Those boards should use the following alternative:

The Treasurer of the Board shall serve a two-year term beginning and ending on the first day of July.

compensated.¹⁹ A Treasurer who is not a Board member may be compensated provided it is established before the appointment.²⁰ The Treasurer must: ²¹

1. Be at least 21 years old;
2. Not be a member of the County Board of School Trustees; and
3. Have a financial background or related experience, or 12 credit hours of college-level accounting.

The Treasurer shall: ²²

1. Furnish a bond, which shall be approved by a majority of the full Board;
2. Maintain custody of school funds;
3. Maintain records of school funds and balances;
4. Prepare a monthly reconciliation report for the Superintendent and Board; and
5. Receive, hold, and expend District funds only upon the order of the Board.

A vacancy in the Treasurer's office is filled by Board appointment.

LEGAL REF.: 5 ILCS 120/7 and 420/4A-106.
105 ILCS 5/8-1, 5/8-2, 5/8-3, 5/8-6, 5/8-16, 5/8-17, 5/10-1, 5/10-5, 5/10-7, 5/10-8, 5/10-13, 5/10-13.1, 5/10-14, 5/10-16.5, [5/10-21.9](#), ~~and 5/17-1~~, ~~and 5/21B-85~~.

CROSS REF.: 2:80 (Board Member Oath and Conduct), 2:105 (Ethics and Gift Ban), 2:150 (Committees), 2:210 (Organizational School Board Meeting), 2:220 (School Board Meeting Procedure)

The footnotes are not intended to be part of the adopted policy; they should be removed before the policy is adopted.

¹⁹ 105 ILCS 5/8-1(b) and (c).

²⁰ 105 ILCS 5/8-3.

²¹ Qualification #1 is required for treasurers in a Class I county or Class II county (Cook Co.) that withdrew from the authority of the township treasurer and township trustees of schools. 105 ILCS 5/8-1(b). This sample policy makes it applicable to Class II county (Cook Co.) districts that were under the authority of the township treasurer and township trustees of schools at the time those offices were abolished.

Qualification #2 is required for treasurers in a Class I county or Class II county (Cook Co.) that withdrew from the authority of the township treasurer and township trustees of schools. 105 ILCS 5/8-1(b). Districts in a Class II county (Cook Co.) that were under the authority of the township treasurer and township trustees of schools at the time those offices were abolished should replace this qualification as follows: "2. Not be the District Superintendent." 105 ILCS 5/8-1(c).

Qualification #3 is required for treasurers in a Class I county. 105 ILCS 5/8-1(d). This qualification should be replaced by the following for districts in a Class II county (Cook Co.): "Upon being appointed for his or her first term, be a certified public accountant or a certified chief school business official as defined in the School Code; experience as a township treasurer in a Class II county school before July 1, 1989 is deemed equivalent." 105 ILCS 5/8-1(e).

²² 105 ILCS 5/8-2, 5/8-6, [5/8-7](#), and 5/8-16.

School Board

Board Member Development 1

The School Board desires that its individual members learn, understand, and practice effective governance principles.² The Board is responsible for Board member orientation and development. Board members have an equal opportunity to attend State and national meetings designed to familiarize members with public school issues, governance, and legislation.

The Board President and/or Superintendent shall provide all Board members with information regarding pertinent education materials, publications, and notices of training or development.

Mandatory Board Member Training ³

Each Board member is responsible for his or her own compliance with the mandatory training laws that are described below:

1. Each Board member elected or appointed to fill a vacancy of at least one year's duration must complete at least four hours of professional development leadership training in education and labor law, financial oversight and accountability, ~~and~~ fiduciary responsibilities, ~~and~~ (beginning in the fall of 2023) trauma-informed practices for students and staff within the first year of his or her first term. ⁴
2. Each Board member must complete training on the Open Meetings Act no later than 90 days after taking the oath of office for the first time. After completing the training, each Board member must file a copy of the certificate of completion with the Board. Training on the Open Meetings Act is only required once. ⁵
3. Each Board member must complete a training program on evaluations under the Performance Evaluation Reform Act (PERA) before participating in a vote on a tenured teacher's dismissal using the optional alternative evaluation dismissal process. This dismissal process is available after the District's PERA implementation date. ⁶

The footnotes are not intended to be part of the adopted policy; they should be removed before the policy is adopted.

¹ State law governs the mandatory board member training provisions in this sample policy.

² The IASB *Foundational Principles of Effective Governance* is available online at: www.iasb.com/principles.cfm.

³ A board may omit the description of mandatory training requirements by deleting "~~that are described below~~" and deleting the numbered list.

⁴ 105 ILCS 5/10-16a, amended by P.A. 102-638. See 105 ILCS 5/10-16a(b-5) for the required and recommended elements of the training regarding trauma-informed practices.

⁵ 5 ILCS 120/1.05(b) ~~and (e)~~. IASB is an authorized provider of this training. 5 ILCS 120/1.05(c).

⁶ 105 ILCS 5/24-16.5. This mandatory training requirement was phased-in as districts implemented evaluations that incorporate student growth as a significant factor, otherwise known as Performance Evaluation Reform Act (PERA) evaluations. The implementation timeline for PERA evaluations varied from district to district but all districts must implement PERA evaluations. After the implementation of PERA evaluations, a district may use an optional alternative evaluative dismissal process using the PERA evaluation. Before voting on a dismissal based upon an optional alternative evaluative dismissal process, a board member must complete a training program on PERA evaluations. IASB is an authorized provider of this training. For more information about PERA, see *PERA Overview for School Board Members*, iasb.com/law/pera.cfm.

The Superintendent or designee shall maintain on the District website a log identifying the complete training and development activities of each Board member, including both mandatory and non-mandatory training.⁷

Professional Development; Adverse Consequences of School Exclusion; Student Behavior⁸

The Board President or Superintendent, or their designees, will make reasonable efforts to provide ongoing professional development to Board members about the adverse consequences of school exclusion and justice-system involvement, effective classroom management strategies, culturally responsive discipline, appropriate and available supportive services for the promotion of student attendance and engagement, and developmentally appropriate disciplinary methods that promote positive and healthy school climates.

Board Self-Evaluation

The Board will conduct periodic self-evaluations with the goal of continuous improvement.⁹

New Board Member Orientation¹⁰

The orientation process for newly elected or appointed Board members includes:

1. The Board President or Superintendent, or their designees, shall give each new Board member a copy of or online access to the Board Policy Manual, the Board's regular meeting minutes for the past year, and other helpful information including material describing the District and explaining the Board's roles and responsibilities.
2. The Board President or designee shall schedule one or more special Board meetings, or schedule time during regular meetings, for Board members to become acquainted and to review Board processes and procedures.
3. The Board President may request a veteran Board member to mentor a new member.¹¹
4. All new members are encouraged to attend workshops for new members conducted by the Illinois Association of School Boards.

The footnotes are not intended to be part of the adopted policy; they should be removed before the policy is adopted.

⁷ 105 ILCS 5/10-16a requires each school district to post on its website, if any, the names of all board members who have completed the minimum of four hours of training described in #1. Recognizing that a board may want to highlight all training and development achievements, the sample policy extends this reporting requirement to all training and development activities. For a website reporting template, see 2:120-E2, *Website Listing of Development and Training Completed by Board Members*.

A board may choose to strictly follow the statute by using the following alternative: "The Superintendent or designee shall post on the District website the names of all Board members who have completed the professional development leadership training described in number 1, above."

⁸ Optional. 105 ILCS 5/10-22.6(c-5), ~~amended by P.A. 100-810, eff. 1-1-19~~. Information about professional development opportunities is available through IASB's Online Learning Center (OLC). Inquire at: onlinelearning@iasb.com.

⁹ Boards are not required to conduct self-evaluations, but may hold a closed meeting with representatives of a State association authorized under Article 23 of the School Code for the purpose of discussing self-evaluation practices and procedures, or professional ethics. 5 ILCS 120/2(Bc)(16).

¹⁰ New board member orientation is a critical step in helping new board members become effective and in promoting a smooth functioning *new team*. The first paragraph should be customized to add references to the IASB policy services that the district receives, e.g., PRESS, PRESS Online, School Board Policies Online, and PRESS Plus.

¹¹ See 2:120-E1, *Guidelines for Serving as a Mentor to a New School Board Member*.

Candidates

The Superintendent or designee shall invite all current candidates for the office of Board member to attend: (1) Board meetings, except that this invitation shall not extend to any closed meetings, and (2) pre-election workshops for candidates.

LEGAL REF.: 5 ILCS 120/1.05 and 120/2.
105 ILCS 5/10-16a and 5/24-16.5.

CROSS REF.: 2:80 (Board Member Oath and Conduct), 2:125 (Board Member Compensation; Expenses), 2:200 (Types of School Board Meetings)

School Board

School Board Meeting Procedure 1

Agenda

The School Board President is responsible for focusing the Board meeting agendas on appropriate content.² The Superintendent shall prepare agendas in consultation with the Board President. The President shall designate a portion of the agenda as a consent agenda for those items that usually do not require extensive discussion before Board action. Upon the request of any Board member, an item will be withdrawn from the consent agenda and placed on the regular agenda for independent consideration.³

Each Board meeting agenda shall contain the general subject matter of any item that will be the subject of final action at the meeting.⁴ Items submitted by Board members to the Superintendent or the President shall be placed on the agenda for an upcoming meeting.⁵ District residents may suggest inclusions for the agenda.⁶ The Board will take final action only on items contained in the posted agenda; items not on the agenda may still be discussed.⁷

The footnotes are not intended to be part of the adopted policy; they should be removed before the policy is adopted.

¹ State law requires boards to have a policy concerning: (1) the public's right to record meetings (5 ILCS 120/2.05), and (2) if applicable, attendance by video or audio means (5 ILCS 120/7, amended by P.A. 101-640). Boards are not mandated to have a policy on the remaining topics covered in this policy. The following items are matters of local discretion: agenda preparation and contents, process for board members to have items placed on agenda, receipt and handling of residents' requests for agenda inclusions, and order of business.

² Appropriate agenda content includes: establishing board processes, clarifying the district's purpose, delegating authority, defining operating limits, monitoring district progress, and taking legally required board action. See *IASB's Foundational Principles of Effective Governance* at: www.iasb.com/IASB/media/Documents/found_prin.pdf.

³ To comply with the Open Meetings Act's (OMA's) mandate that minutes contain a "summary of discussion on all matters proposed, deliberated, or decided," a board should include a list of consent items in the agenda. OMA also requires that any final action "be preceded by a public recital of the nature of the matter being considered and other information that will inform the public of the business being conducted." 405 ILCS 120/2(e). Some level of explanation of the consent agenda items must be verbally given before a board votes to approve a consent agenda. The Ill. Supreme Court has held that "the recital must announce the nature of the matter under consideration, with sufficient detail to identify the particular transaction or issue, but need not provide an explanation of its terms or its significance." *Bd. of Educ. of Springfield Sch. Dist. No. 186 v. Atty. Gen. of Ill.*, 77 N.E.3d 625 (Ill. 2017).

⁴ 5 ILCS 120/2.02(c). The Ill. Appellate Court held that OMA prohibits a board from voting on a matter at a regular meeting that is not on the pre-meeting published agenda. *Rice v. Bd. of Trustees of Adams County*, 326 Ill.App.3d 1120 (4th Dist. 2002).

⁵ An alternative follows:

Any Board member may submit suggested agenda items to the Board President for his or her consideration.

⁶ See policy 2:230, *Public Participation at School Board Meetings and Petitions to the Board*. In districts governed by a board of school directors, an appointed board official must give a person requesting consideration of a matter by the board a formal written response no later than 60 days after receiving the request. The response must establish a meeting before the board or list the reasons for denying the request. 105 ILCS 5/10-6.

Options follow to restrict the addition of new agenda items; the phrases between [] may be used together, separately, or eliminated.

Discussion items may be added to the agenda [at the beginning of a regular meeting] [upon unanimous approval of those Board members present].

⁷ An opinion from the Ill. Public Access Counselor found no violation of the OMA when a board removed an item from the agenda within the 48-hour notice time period. PAO 14-3. Removals inform the public that the board does not plan to proceed on the topic.

The Superintendent shall provide a copy of the agenda, with adequate data and background information, to each Board member at least 48 hours before each meeting, except a meeting held in the event of an emergency.⁸ The meeting agenda shall be posted in accordance with Board policy 2:200, *Types of School Board Meetings*.

The Board President shall determine the order of business at regular Board meetings. Upon consent of a majority of members present, the order of business at any meeting may be changed.

Voting Method

Unless otherwise provided by law, when a vote is taken upon any measure before the Board, with a quorum being present, a majority of the votes cast shall determine its outcome.⁹ A vote of *abstain* or *present*, or a vote other than *yea* or *nay*, or a failure to vote, is counted for the purposes of determining whether a quorum is present. A vote of *abstain* or *present*, or a vote other than *yea* or *nay*, or a failure to vote, however, is not counted in determining whether a measure has been passed by the Board, unless otherwise stated in law. The sequence for casting votes is rotated. ¹⁰

The footnotes are not intended to be part of the adopted policy; they should be removed before the policy is adopted.

⁸ State law does not require this, except that 105 ILCS 5/10-16 requires members to receive a written notice of a special meeting that includes the meeting's purpose.

⁹ In most situations, the failure of a member to vote has the effect of acquiescence or concurrence with the majority of votes cast. Prosser v. Village of Fox Lake, 438 N.E.2d 134 (Ill. 1982); People v. Bertrand, 978 N.E.2d 681 (1st Dist. 2012). For example, a motion passes with a vote of two *yeas*, one *nay*, and four *abstentions*. A motion fails with a vote of two *yeas*, three *nays*, and two *abstentions*. A motion fails with a vote of three *yeas*, three *nays*, and one *abstain* because there is no majority. Exceptions include when a statute requires the *affirmative vote* of a majority or extra. Statutory exceptions include the following board actions:

1. Dismissing a teacher for any reason other than reduction of staff or elimination of that position requires approval by the majority of all members. 105 ILCS 5/24-12.
2. Directing the sale of district real property or buildings thereon must be approved by at least 2/3 of the board members (105 ILCS 5/5-22), unless the sale is residential property constructed or renovated by students as part of a curricular program, in which case, the board could engage the services of a licensed real estate broker to sell the property for a commission not to exceed 7%, contingent upon the public listing of the property on a multiple listing service for a minimum of 14 calendar days and a sale of the property happens within 120 days.
3. Making or renewing a lease of school property to another school district or municipality or body politic and corporate for a term longer than ten years, or to alter the terms of such a lease whose unexpired term exceeds 10 years, requires approval by at least 2/3 of the board's full membership. 105 ILCS 5/10-22.11.
4. Leasing any building, rooms, grounds, and appurtenances to be used by the district for school or administration purposes for a term longer than ten years, or to alter the terms of such a lease whose unexpired term exceeds ten years, requires approval by at least 2/3 of the board's full membership. 105 ILCS 5/10-22.12.
5. Obtaining personal property by lease or installment contract requires approval by an affirmative vote of at least 2/3 of the board members. *Personal property* includes computer hardware and software and all equipment, fixtures, and improvements to existing district facilities to accommodate computers. 105 ILCS 5/10-22.25a.
6. Adopting a supplemental budget after a successful referendum requires approval by a majority of the full board. 105 ILCS 5/17-3.2.
7. Petitioning the circuit court for an emergency election requires approval by a majority of the members. 10 ILCS 5/2A-1.4.
8. Expending funds in emergency situation in the absence of required bidding requires approval by at least 3/4 of the board. 105 ILCS 5/10-20.21.
9. Exchanging school building sites requires approval by at least a 2/3 majority of the board. 105 ILCS 5/5-23.
10. Waiving the administrative cost cap requires approval by an affirmative vote of at least 2/3 of the board. 105 ILCS 5/17-1.5.
11. Authorizing an advisory question of public policy to be placed on the ballot at the next regularly scheduled election requires approval by a majority of the board. 105 ILCS 5/9-1.5.

¹⁰ Voting sequence is at the board's discretion. A board may indicate how frequently it changes the voting sequence by adding *after each vote*, *monthly*, or *annually* to the end of the sentence. All board members, including officers, may make motions and vote.

On all questions involving the expenditure of money and on all questions involving the closing of a meeting to the public, a roll call vote shall be taken and entered in the Board's minutes. An individual Board member may request that a roll call vote be taken on any other matter; the President or other presiding officer may approve or deny the request but a denial is subject to being overturned by a majority vote of the members present. 11

Minutes

The Board Secretary shall keep written minutes of all Board meetings (whether open or closed), which shall be signed by the President and the Secretary.¹² The minutes include: 13

1. The meeting's date, time, and place;
2. Board members recorded as either present or absent;
3. A summary of the discussion on all matters proposed, deliberated, or decided, and a record of any votes taken;
4. On all matters requiring a roll call vote, a record of who voted *yea* and *nay*;
5. If the meeting is adjourned to another date, the time and place of the adjourned meeting;
6. The vote of each member present when a vote is taken to hold a closed meeting or portion of a meeting, and the reason for the closed meeting with a citation to the specific exception contained in the Open Meetings Act (OMA) authorizing the closed meeting;
7. A record of all motions, including individuals making and seconding motions;
8. Upon request by a Board member, a record of how he or she voted on a particular motion;¹⁴ and
9. The type of meeting, including any notices and, if a reconvened meeting, the original meeting's date.

The minutes shall be submitted to the Board for approval or modification at its next regularly scheduled open meeting. Minutes for open meetings must be approved within 30 days after the meeting or at the second subsequent regular meeting, whichever is later. 15

~~At least semi-annually~~ Every six months, or as soon after as is practicable, in an open meeting, the Board: (1) reviews minutes from all closed meetings that are currently unavailable for public release, and (2) ~~decides~~ determines which, if any, no longer require confidential treatment and are available for

The footnotes are not intended to be part of the adopted policy; they should be removed before the policy is adopted.

11 This paragraph's first sentence contains the requirements in 105 ILCS 5/10-7. The second sentence is optional and may be deleted or amended. Other optional provisions include:

Option 1: Any Board member may include a written explanation of his or her vote in the District file containing individual Board member statements; the explanation will not be part of the minutes.

Option 2: Any Board member may request that his or her vote be changed before the President announces the result.

12 105 ILCS 5/10-7 and 5 ILCS 120/2.06. The minutes are the only record showing that the board took official action, including necessary prerequisites to make such action legally sufficient. A non-member recording secretary or clerk may be given these responsibilities. 105 ILCS 5/10-14.

13 All items listed are required to be recorded in minutes except items 7-9; other items may be included at the board's discretion. 5 ILCS 120/2.06 and 120/2a; 105 ILCS 5/10-7. The Ill. Public Access Counselor (PAC) found a board's vague reference to a *personnel matter* insufficient to meet the requirements of #3. PAO 13-07.

14 The intent behind this optional item is to give an individual member a means of recording his or her support or opposition to a motion that was taken by oral vote; it will record that the individual took an alternative position to that of the majority without having the minutes recite unnecessary detail.

15 Required by 5 ILCS 120/2.06(b).

public inspection.¹⁶ This is also referred to as a semi-annual review. The Board may meet in a prior closed session to review the minutes from closed meetings that are currently unavailable for public release, but it reports its determination in open session. ¹⁷

The Board's meeting minutes must be submitted to the Board Treasurer at such times as the Treasurer may require. ¹⁸

The official minutes are in the custody of the Board Secretary.¹⁹ Open meeting minutes are available for inspection during regular office hours within 10 days after the Board's approval;²⁰ they may be inspected in the District's main office, in the presence of the Secretary, the Superintendent or designee, or any Board member.

Minutes from closed meetings are likewise available, but only if the Board has released them for public inspection, except that Board members may access closed session minutes not yet released for public inspection (1) in the District's administrative offices or their official storage location, and (2) in the presence of the Recording Secretary, the Superintendent or designated administrator, or any elected Board member.²¹ The minutes, whether reviewed by members of the public or the Board, shall not be removed from the District's administrative offices or their official storage location except by vote of the Board or by court order. ²²

The Board's open meeting minutes shall be posted on the District website within ten days after the Board approves them; the minutes will remain posted for at least 60 days. ²³

Verbatim Record of Closed Meetings

The Superintendent, or the Board Secretary when the Superintendent is absent, shall audio record all closed meetings.²⁴ If neither is present, the Board President or presiding officer shall assume this

The footnotes are not intended to be part of the adopted policy; they should be removed before the policy is adopted.

¹⁶ Required by 5 ILCS 120/2.06(de), amended by P.A. 102-653. If a board is unable to conduct the review every six months, it must do so as soon after as is practicable, taking into account the nature and meeting schedule of the board. Id. A board may also conduct the review more frequently. For the sake of brevity and to align with the closed meeting exception in 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(21) that continues to refer to a public body's semi-annual review of its closed session minutes, this policy's exhibits use the term semi-annual, even though that term was removed from 5 ILCS 120/2.06(d).

While board notes from closed sessions may be confidential under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), they may be discoverable by the opposing party in a lawsuit. Bobkoski v. Cary Sch. Bd., Dist. 26, 141 F.R.D. 88 (N.D. Ill. 1992).

The failure to strictly comply with the semi-annual review does not cause the written minutes or related verbatim record to become public, provided that the board, within 60 days of discovering its failure to strictly comply, reviews the closed session minutes and reports the result of that review in open session. 5 ILCS 120/2.06(d), amended by P.A. 102-653.

¹⁷ 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(21) allows boards to discuss the confidentiality needs of closed meeting minutes in closed meetings.

¹⁸ Required by 105 ILCS 5/10-7.

¹⁹ Optional provision: "A copy of the minutes is kept in a secure location appropriate for valuables."

²⁰ Required by 5 ILCS 120/2.06(b).

²¹ 5 ILCS 120/2.06(fe). The listed individuals in the statute are matched to the titles in the IASB Policy Reference Manual. If the board wishes to mirror the statutory language, delete: ~~the Recording Secretary, the Superintendent or designated administrator, or any elected Board member~~ and replace with: "a records secretary, an administrative official of the public body, or any elected official of the public body."

See the discussion in paragraph two of f/n 27 below about what *in the presence of* means.

²² Id.

²³ Posting on the website is required *only if* the district has a website that is maintained by a full-time staff member; if not, this sentence may be omitted. 5 ILCS 120/2.06(b).

²⁴ Boards must keep a verbatim record of their closed meetings in the form of an audio or video recording. 5 ILCS 120/2.06(a). This sample policy uses audio recording only; a board that uses a video recording should amend this policy and exhibit 2:220-E1, *Board Treatment of Closed Meeting Verbatim Recordings and Minutes*.

The interests of continuity, efficiency, and ease of holding someone accountable suggest that the superintendent be made responsible for making and storing the verbatim recordings. If the superintendent is not present, e.g., during discussions concerning the superintendent's contract, the tasks should be given to a board member.

responsibility. After the closed meeting, the person making the audio recording shall label the recording with the date and store it in a secure location. The Superintendent shall ensure that: (1) an audio recording device and all necessary accompanying items are available to the Board for every closed meeting, and (2) a secure location for storing closed meeting audio recordings is maintained close to the Board's regular meeting location. ²⁵

After 18 months have passed since being made, the audio recording of a closed meeting is destroyed provided the Board approved: (1) its destruction, and (2) minutes of the particular closed meeting. ²⁶

Individual Board members may access verbatim recordings in the presence of the Recording Secretary, the Superintendent or designated administrator, or any elected Board member. ²⁷ Access to the verbatim recordings is available at the District's administrative offices or the verbatim recording's official storage location. ²⁸ Requests shall be made to the Superintendent or Board President. While a Board member is listening to a verbatim recording, it shall not be re-recorded or removed from the District's main office or official storage location, except by vote of the Board or by court order. ²⁹

Before making such requests, Board members should consider whether such requests are germane to their responsibilities, service to District, and/or Oath of Office in policy 2:80, *Board Member Oath and Conduct*. In the interest of encouraging free and open expression by Board members during closed

The footnotes are not intended to be part of the adopted policy; they should be removed before the policy is adopted.

²⁵ Alternatively, use: "is maintained within the District's administrative offices or their official storage location."

²⁶ This paragraph paraphrases 5 ILCS 120/2.06(c). No notification to, or the approval of, a records commission or the State Archivist is needed if a recording is destroyed under the conditions listed.

²⁷ 5 ILCS 120/2.06(e). The listed individuals align with the other titles used in the IASB Policy Reference Manual. If the board wishes to mirror the statute, delete: ~~the Recording Secretary, the Superintendent or designated administrator, or any elected Board member~~ and replace with: "a records secretary, an administrative official of the public body, or any elected official of the public body."

The intent of the *in the presence of* language is meant to protect both (1) the verbatim recordings/closed session minutes (see f/n 21 above), and (2) the board members requesting access to them. It ensures that a school district official is present at all times when a requesting board member accesses the verbatim recording/closed session minutes. The requirement is meant to prevent misuse and removal of the verbatim recording/closed session minutes from the district offices or official storage location. It is also meant to protect the board member who requests the access from being alone and in a situation where ~~he or she~~ *the board member* could potentially be accused of tampering with or taking the verbatim recording/closed session minutes.

Consult the board attorney about:

1. The practice of sending an *appointed* board member to be present with a board member who requests access to verbatim recordings/closed session minutes. 5 ILCS 120/2.06(e) states, "any *elected* member of the Board;" appointed is not listed but is mentioned elsewhere in the language of this section of the law;
2. Access to verbatim recordings/closed session minutes by other officials employed by the district, e.g., superintendent or other high-level administrators and even the board attorney; and
3. How this law affects the sharing of closed session minutes with board members prior to a meeting at which the closed session minutes will be approved.

The intent of P.A. 99-515, which amended 5 ILCS 120/2.06(e), was to manage a board member's *individual* request for access to these items in ~~his or her~~ *the board member's* individual capacity (see 2:80, *Board Member Oath and Conduct*), not change prior practices in regard to other officials and board attorneys or the required work of school boards under various laws. While many attorneys do not interpret the *new* law to restrict access or change procedures for these other high-level school officials and attorneys employed by the district, some attorneys do and it is important to obtain legal advice on this specific issue.

²⁸ *Id.*

²⁹ *Id.*

meetings, the recordings of closed meetings should not be used by Board members to confirm or dispute the accuracy of recollections. 30

Quorum and Participation by Audio or Video Means 31

A quorum of the Board must be physically present at all Board meetings. A majority of the full membership of the Board constitutes a quorum.

Provided a quorum is physically present, a Board member may attend a meeting by video or audio conference if he or she is prevented from physically attending because of: (1) personal illness or disability, (2) employment or District business, or (3) a family or other emergency. If a member wishes to attend a meeting by video or audio means, he or she must notify the recording secretary or Superintendent at least 24 hours before the meeting unless advance notice is impractical. The recording secretary or Superintendent will inform the Board President and make appropriate arrangements. A Board member who attends a meeting by audio or video means, as provided in this policy, may participate in all aspects of the Board meeting including voting on any item.

No Physical Presence of Quorum and Participation by Audio or Video: Disaster Declaration 32

The ability of the Board to meet in person with a quorum physically present at its meeting location may be affected by the Governor or the Director of the Ill. Dept. of Public Health issuing a disaster

The footnotes are not intended to be part of the adopted policy; they should be removed before the policy is adopted.

30 This paragraph is optional. It provides boards an opportunity to discuss and encourage each member to carefully think about purposes for their requests to listen to verbatim recordings, which historically has been and should continue to be to “access information relevant to the exercise of duties” for the public body. Intra-board conflicts may escalate if the recording is used to confirm or dispute who-said-what. Prior to P.A. 99-515, OMA did (and still does) allow boards to release these types of information. 5 ILCS 120/2.06(e). Further, Ill. Atty. Gen. Op. 32, 1996, opined that board members cannot be denied access to information relevant to the exercise of his or her duties. Board members should evaluate whether their requests under 5 ILCS 120/2.06(e) are “relevant to the exercise of their duties” before making such requests. Confirming or disputing who-said-what diverts resources away from operations of the district in educating its students. Additional considerations in listening to verbatim recordings may include personnel and student records confidentiality issues, which should be discussed with the board attorney.

31 5 ILCS 120/2.01 and 120/7, amended by P.A. 101-640. See also 105 ILCS 5/10-6 and 5/10-12. In order to allow attendance by video or audio means, a board must adopt a policy conforming to the restrictions in OMA. The statute requires the board member who wishes to attend remotely to notify the “recording secretary or clerk of the public body.” The policy includes the superintendent as a possible person to receive the notice. Everything in this section is required aside from provisions on the length of notification that is given the secretary and the process for accommodating the request. Alternatively, a board may: (1) prohibit members from participating by video or audio means by omitting this section, (2) add other requirements, or (3) alter the 24 hour notification. Note that the statute does not contemplate someone either approving or denying a request, only that the request be accommodated if the notification is provided.

In a non-binding opinion, the PAC found a public body violated OMA when it allowed a board member to join a closed session meeting remotely without first taking action at that particular meeting in open session to approve the remote participation. 2019 PAC 57660. Therefore, even with the adoption of this policy to approve remote participation, best practice is to ensure the public is informed of any board members that are participating remotely for a particular board meeting. Consult the board attorney for advice on whether the board should take action every time it wishes to permit a member to participate remotely or in those instances where a board member objects to such participation.

32 5 ILCS 120/2.01 and 120/7(e)(1)-(10), amended by P.A. 101-640. See also 105 ILCS 5/10-6 and 5/10-12. During the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, Ill. Gov. Pritzker issued Executive Order (EO) 2020-07 pursuant to 20 ILCS 3305/7 (disaster proclamation due to public health emergency) that temporarily suspended OMA’s physical quorum requirement. The Governor extended this OMA relief through subsequent Executive Orders as the crisis continued. [See EOs 2020-18, 2020-33, and 2020-39.](#) During the period covered by EO 2020-39, In June of 2020, 5 ILCS 120/120/7(e), amended by P.A. 101-640 was enacted, immediately requiring public bodies to meet a number of conditions before suspending the physical quorum requirement.

Boards must remember that public comment is still required when a quorum is not physically present at the meeting location. See Public Comment section of the Ill. Atty. Gen.’s guidance entitled *Guidance to Public Bodies on the Open Meetings Act and the Freedom of Information Act During the COVID-19 Pandemic* on p. 5 at: www.foia.ilattorneygeneral.net/pdf/OMA_FOIA_Guide.pdf.

declaration related to a public health emergency.³³ The Board President or, if the office is vacant or the President is absent or unable to perform the office's duties, the Vice President determines that an in-person meeting or a meeting conducted under the **Quorum and Participation by Audio or Video Means** subhead above, is not practical or prudent because of the disaster declaration; if neither the President nor Vice President are present or able to perform this determination, the Superintendent shall serve as the duly authorized designee for purposes of making this determination.³⁴

The individual who makes this determination for the Board shall put it in writing, include it on the Board's published notice and agenda for the audio or video meeting and in the meeting minutes,³⁵ and ensure that the Board meets every OMA requirement for the Board to meet by video or audio conference without the physical presence of a quorum.³⁶

Rules of Order

Unless State law or Board-adopted rules apply, the Board President, as the presiding officer, will use the most recent edition of Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised (11th Edition), as a guide when a question arises concerning procedure.³⁷

Broadcasting and Recording Board Meetings

Any person may record or broadcast an open Board meeting.³⁸ Special requests to facilitate recording or broadcasting an open Board meeting, such as seating, writing surfaces, lighting, and access to electrical power, should be directed to the Superintendent at least 24 hours before the meeting.

The footnotes are not intended to be part of the adopted policy; they should be removed before the policy is adopted.

³³ The phrase "due to public health emergency" aligns with Ill. Emergency Act (IEMA), 20 ILCS 3305/4 and 7, which provides the governor with the power to declare a disaster. 5 ILCS 120/7(e)(1), amended by P.A. 101-640, uses the phrase "related to public health concerns because [the governor has declared] a disaster" and while not aligning with IEMA text, means "public health emergency." For ease of understanding and alignment with IEMA, this policy uses "public health emergency."

To avoid confusion, note that the triggers under 5 ILCS 120/7(e), amended by P.A. 101-640, for when a school board may conduct its meetings by audio or video conference without the physical presence of a quorum are a bit more broad than the School Code's triggers to implement remote and/or blended remote learning days (RLD/BLRDs). OMA states (1) the "governor or the director of IDPH has issued a disaster declaration of a disaster as defined in 20 ILCS 3305/ ...". This means that it is possible for the board to meet remotely if the director of IDPH declares a disaster under OMA, but that may not mean a district must implement RLD/BLRDs because the School Code states that the governor must declare the disaster.

³⁴ 5 ILCS 120/7(e)(2), amended by P.A. 101-640 states "the head of the public body as defined in [the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 ILCS 140/2(e), FOIA]." FOIA defines *head of the public body* to mean the *president* or "such person's duly authorized designee." 5 ILCS 140/2(e). Policy 2:110, *Qualifications, Term, and Duties of Board Officers*, designates the vice president to perform the duties of the president if that office is vacant or he or she is absent or unable to perform the office's duties.

For practical purposes if a disaster is declared due to a public health concern, this policy designates the superintendent as "[the president or vice president's] duly authorized designee" pursuant to the authority of 5 ILCS 140/2(e) for the board to move forward with the required determination to meet by audio or video with no physical presence of a quorum.

³⁵ While this phrase of the sentence is not required in OMA, many attorneys agree that transparency best practices in this situation include the individual making the determination to: (1) put it in writing referring to the specific disaster declaration applicable to the board's jurisdiction and the public health concern/public health emergency that applies to not having an in-person meeting; and (2) include that written determination (a) on the board's published notice and agenda for the audio or video meeting, and (b) in the meeting minutes.

³⁶ See 2:220-E9, *Requirements for No Physical Presence of Quorum and Participation by Audio or Video During Disaster Declaration*.

³⁷ Boards are not required to follow any particular rules of order. Rules, however, must be in writing and available for public inspection, in order to have any legal effect. 105 ILCS 5/10-20.5.

³⁸ The public's right to record meetings must be addressed in board policy. 5 ILCS 120/2.05. However, a provision requiring advance notice to record a meeting is invalid. PAO 12-10.

Recording meetings shall not distract or disturb Board members, other meeting participants, or members of the public. The Board President may designate a location for recording equipment, may restrict the movements of individuals who are using recording equipment, or may take such other steps as are deemed necessary to preserve decorum and facilitate the meeting.

LEGAL REF.: 5 ILCS 120/2a, 120/2.02, 120/2.05, 120/2.06, and 120/7.
105 ILCS 5/10-6, 5/10-7, 5/10-12, and 5/10-16.

CROSS REF.: 2:80 (Board Member Oath and Conduct), 2:150 (Committees), 2:200 (Types of School Board Meetings), 2:210 (Organizational School Board Meeting), 2:230 (Public Participation at School Board Meetings and Petitions to the Board)

School Board

Uniform Grievance Procedure 1

A student, parent/guardian, employee, or community member should notify any District Complaint Manager if he or she believes that the School Board, its employees, or its agents have violated his or her rights guaranteed by the State or federal Constitution, State or federal statute, or Board policy², or have a complaint regarding any one of the following:³

1. Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. §12101 et seq.⁴

The footnotes are not intended to be part of the adopted policy; they should be removed before the policy is adopted.

¹ State or federal law requires this subject matter be covered by policy and controls this policy's content. This policy contains an item on which collective bargaining may be required. Any policy that impacts upon wages, hours, and terms and conditions of employment is subject to collective bargaining upon request by the employee representative, even if the policy involves an inherent managerial right. Employee grievance procedures are a mandatory subject of bargaining and cannot be changed without the employee exclusive representative's consent. This policy and its companion [sample policy 2:265, Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Procedure](#), are in addition to, and not a substitute for, the employee grievance procedure contained in a collective bargaining agreement.

A grievance procedure is required by many civil rights acts and implementing regulations, including those listed. For the sake of consistency and ease of administration, this policy consolidates all board grievance procedures, excluding Title IX sexual harassment complaints (see [sample policy 2:265, Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Procedure](#)) into one policy, except those contained in collective bargaining agreements. See the cross references for the policies referring to this uniform grievance procedure policy.

² Including the phrase "guaranteed by the State or federal Constitution, State or federal statute, or Board policy" broadens the scope of this policy beyond the items listed. Consult the board attorney regarding whether to retain this phrase and/or to otherwise limit the scope of this policy.

³ The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (20 U.S.C. §1400 et seq.) is not included in the list of statutes that may serve as the basis of a grievance, and attorneys disagree whether it should be. Many believe that IDEA provides the exclusive remedy; others believe that including IDEA allows parents an opportunity to get their position before the board. Unique and specific complaint resolution mechanisms are expressly provided under IDEA, Article 14 of the School Code, and their respective implementing regulations. These mechanisms follow: (1) IDEA at 20 U.S.C. §1415 (procedural safeguards-mediation and due process); (2) IDEA regulations at 34 C.F.R. §§300.151-300.153 (state complaints), 300.506 (mediation), and 300.507 et seq. (due process); (3) School Code at §§14/8.02a (mediation and due process) and 14/8.02b (expedited due process); and (4) special education regulations at 23 Ill.Admin.Code §§226.560 (Mediation), 226.570 (State Complaint Procedures), and Subpart G (due process). A board that would like to include IDEA should consult the board attorney.

⁴ The Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) (Pub. L. 110-325), made significant changes to the Americans with Disabilities Act's definition of disability by broadening the scope of coverage. The ADAAA also overturned a series of U.S. Supreme Court decisions that interpreted the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 in a way that made it difficult to prove that impairments were a disability. The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's (EEOC) regulations, 29 C.F.R. Part 1630, are at: www.eeoc.gov/laws/types/disability_regulations.cfm.

Boards should consult with their attorneys regarding how the ADAAA and its implementing regulations impact their districts.

Title II of the ADA of 1990 also includes website accessibility. Addressing website accessibility is complicated. Many entities addressing website accessibility use *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines* (WCAG) 2.0 [or 2.1](#), a frequently cited accessibility standard that contains guidelines developed by a private group of accessibility experts. [See www.w3.org/WAI/standards-guidelines/wcag/](#). WCAG 2.0 is the standard the U.S. Dept. of Justice referenced in its recent Title II rulemaking; however, it is not adopted as the formal legal standard for public accommodation websites. While #WCAG is not adopted as the formal [federal](#) legal standard for public accommodation websites, it has been used in many consent decrees and settlement agreements [and it is required by the School Code](#). [See www.w3.org/TR/WCAG20/105 ILCS 5/10-20.75 \(final citation pending\)](#), added by P.A. 102-238, eff. 8-1-22, requires school districts to ensure their Internet websites or web services comply with Level AA of the WCAG 2.1 or any revised version of those guidelines. Internet website or web service means "any third party online curriculum that is made available to enrolled students or the public by a school district through the Internet." *Id.*

2. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, 20 U.S.C. §1681 et seq., excluding Title IX sexual harassment complaints governed by policy 2:265, *Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Procedure*
3. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. §791 et seq. ⁵
4. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, 42 U.S.C. §2000d et seq.
5. Equal Employment Opportunities Act (Title VII of the Civil Rights Act), 42 U.S.C. §2000e et seq.
6. Sexual harassment prohibited by the State Officials and Employees Ethics Act⁶, 5 ILCS 430/70-5(a); Illinois Human Rights Act, 775 ILCS 5/; and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. §2000e et seq. (Title IX sexual harassment complaints are addressed under policy 2:265, *Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Procedure*) ⁷

The footnotes are not intended to be part of the adopted policy; they should be removed before the policy is adopted.

⁵ See f/n 4's discussion of website accessibility above. ~~To avoid allegations that a district violated Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Title II of the ADA of 1990, many attorneys suggest that school districts' websites meet the WCAG 2.0 guidelines. But see also~~ the discussion in f/n 2 of sample policy 8:70, *Accommodating Individuals with Disabilities*.

⁶ 5 ILCS 430/70-5(a), amended by P.A. ~~s 100-554 and~~ 101-221, requires governmental entities (including school districts) to adopt an ordinance or resolution establishing a policy to prohibit sexual harassment that contains certain prescribed elements. See sample policy 5:20, *Workplace Harassment Prohibited*, at f/n 3 and subhead **Complaints of Sexual Harassment Made Against Board Members by Elected Officials** in sample policy 2:105, *Ethics and Gift Ban*, for further detail. Complaints of sexual harassment made against board members by fellow board members or other elected officials of governmental units must undergo an *independent review*, which is not a term defined in the statute. Unlike the powers granted by the Ill. General Assembly to municipalities to pass ordinances, school boards govern by rules referred to as *policies*. 105 ILCS 5/10-20.5. Further, school boards may only exercise powers given to them that are consistent with the School Code that may be requisite or proper for the maintenance, operation, and development of any school or schools under the jurisdiction of the board. 105 ILCS 5/10-20. School districts are also required to create, maintain, and implement an age-appropriate sexual harassment policy. 105 ILCS 5/10-20.69 (~~final citation pending~~), added by P.A. 101-418. See sample policy 7:20, *Harassment of Students Prohibited*, and its f/n 89 for further information.

~~A new publication law, 50 ILCS 205/3c, added by P.A. 100-1040,~~ requires a school district to post on its website and make available to news media specific information about severance agreements that it enters into because an employee or contractor was "found to have engaged in sexual harassment or sexual discrimination, as defined by the Ill. Human Rights Act or Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964." Consult the board attorney about the word *found*. It raises many practical application questions, e.g., when does the word *found* trigger a board's compliance responsibility pursuant to this law. Such questions include, but are not limited to:

1. Must a school board make a *finding* to trigger this requirement? If the severance agreement is entered into post-termination, a record of board *findings* rarely exists.
2. Are charges for termination *findings*? Often superintendents submit charges for termination, but these are not technically *findings*.
3. Are charges based on a complaint manager's report and determination(s) *findings* under the law when a board still has the ability to review and reject the complaint manager's determination(s)?

Next, contrast the above publication law with the Government Severance Pay Act (GSPA), 5 ILCS 415/10(a)(2), ~~added by P.A. 100-895~~. GSPA prohibits an employee of a school district with contract provisions for severance pay from receiving any severance if he or she is fired for *misconduct* by the board. GSPA defines *misconduct* to include sexual harassment and/or discrimination. *Id.* at 415/5.

Consult the board attorney about how to reconcile whether sexual harassment and/or sexual discrimination is misconduct for which a severance would be prohibited under the GSPA, and therefore, not available to be published under 50 ILCS 205/3c, ~~added by P.A. 100-1040~~. And for further discussion and other applicable transparency laws that apply to this issue, see also f/n 15 in sample policy 5:20, *Workplace Harassment Prohibited*.

⁷ Consult the board attorney regarding proper filing and storage of these investigation documents, including whether certain student-related investigation documents are *sole possession records*, a Family Policy Compliance Office (FPCO)-created exemption to the Family Education Rights Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. §1232g). See *Letter to Ruscio*, 115 LRP 18601 (FPCO 12-17-14).

7. Breastfeeding accommodations for students, 105 ILCS 5/10-20.60 ⁸
8. Bullying, 105 ILCS 5/27-23.7 ⁹
9. Misuse of funds received for services to improve educational opportunities for educationally disadvantaged or deprived children ¹⁰
10. Curriculum, instructional materials, and/or programs
11. Victims' Economic Security and Safety Act, 820 ILCS 180/
12. Illinois Equal Pay Act of 2003, 820 ILCS 112/
13. Provision of services to homeless students
14. Illinois Whistleblower Act, 740 ILCS 174/ ¹¹
15. Misuse of genetic information prohibited by the Illinois Genetic Information Privacy Act, 410 ILCS 513/; and Titles I and II of the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act, 42 U.S.C. §2000ff et seq. ¹²

The footnotes are not intended to be part of the adopted policy; they should be removed before the policy is adopted.

⁸ 105 ILCS 5/10-20.60, ~~added by P.A. 100-29~~, requires schools to implement the Ill. sex equity grievance procedures when processing student complaints about breastfeeding accommodations. Complainants must be informed that the board's decision may be appealed to the Regional Superintendent and, thereafter, to the State Superintendent. 23 Ill.Admin.Code §200.40. **Note:** Certain claims brought under Sec. 10-20.60 may also be covered by the anti-discrimination protections of Title IX; consult the board attorney for further advice. Guidance from U.S. Dept. of Education on Title IX requirements for pregnant and parenting students (June 2013) is available at: www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oeo/docs/pregnancy.pdf www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oeo/frontpage/pro-students/issues/sex-issue03.html.

⁹ All districts must have a policy on bullying. 105 ILCS 5/27-23.7. See sample policy 7:180, *Prevention of and Response to Bullying, Intimidation, and Harassment*. The inclusion of *bullying* in the list of topics that may serve as the basis of a grievance furthers the obligation to communicate this policy to students and their parents/guardians.

¹⁰ Parents/guardians of educationally disadvantaged children may sue a district for misuse of funds allocated by State law for the benefit of such children. *Novola v. Bd. of Educ.*, 179 Ill.2d 121 (Ill. 1997) (affirming the appellate court's conclusion in *Novola v. Bd. of Educ.*, 284 Ill.App.3d 128 (1st Dist. 1996) that parents/guardians may pursue a claim to enforce the requirements of the School Code but holding that the proper action for enforcement is by means of mandamus not an implied right of action).

¹¹ The ~~Ill.~~ Whistleblower Act (740 ILCS 174/) includes school districts in the definition of employer. It protects employees from employer retaliation for disclosing information to a government or law enforcement agency. Section 15 also contains language prohibiting employers from retaliating against employees who disclose information in a court, an administrative hearing, or before a legislative commission or committee, or in any other proceeding where the employee has reasonable cause to believe that the information reveals a violation of a State or federal law, rule or regulation. The Ill. ~~Whistleblower-Reward and Protection~~ *False Claims* Act (740 ILCS ~~175-174~~) includes school districts in its definition of *State*. A strict interpretation of this language appears to allow school boards to collect civil penalties and costs against someone making a false claim. Before disciplining any employee, boards should thoroughly investigate the ramifications of these acts in consultation with their attorney and liability insurance carriers.

¹² The Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act (GINA) (42 U.S.C. §2000ff et seq.) is a federal law. Title I addresses the use of genetic information pertaining to health insurance. Title II protects job applicants, current and former employees, labor union members, and apprentices and trainees from discrimination based on their genetic information. GINA covers employers with 15 or more employees.

16. Employee Credit Privacy Act, 820 ILCS 70/ 13

The Complaint Manager will first attempt to resolve complaints without resorting to this grievance procedure. If a formal complaint is filed under this policy, the Complaint Manager will address the complaint promptly and equitably. A student and/or parent/guardian filing a complaint under this policy may forego any informal suggestions and/or attempts to resolve it and may proceed directly to this grievance procedure. The Complaint Manager will not require a student or parent/guardian complaining of any form of harassment to attempt to resolve allegations directly with the accused (or the accused's parents/guardians); this includes mediation.

Right to Pursue Other Remedies Not Impaired

The right of a person to prompt and equitable¹⁴ resolution of a complaint filed under this policy shall not be impaired by the person's pursuit of other remedies, e.g., criminal complaints, civil actions, etc. Use of this grievance procedure is not a prerequisite to the pursuit of other remedies and use of this grievance procedure does not extend any filing deadline related to the pursuit of other remedies. If a person is pursuing another remedy subject to a complaint under this policy, the District will continue with a simultaneous investigation under this policy.

The footnotes are not intended to be part of the adopted policy; they should be removed before the policy is adopted.

GINA broadly defines genetic information to include information about an individual's genetic tests, their family members, and, among other things, the manifestation of a disease or disorder in the individual or the individual's family members. Information about an individual's or family member's age or gender is excluded from genetic information. Its remedies mirror those available under a Title VII of the Civil Rights Act claim: back pay, reinstatement, attorneys' fees and compensatory and punitive damages. Retaliation against an individual who brings a claim under GINA is also prohibited. Federal regulations are available at 29 C.F.R. Part 1635, and background information on these regulations is available at: www.eeoc.gov/policy/docs/ganda-geneticinfo.html www.eeoc.gov/regulations-related-genetic-discrimination. An FAQ entitled *FAQs on the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act* is available at: www.dol.gov/agencies/ebsa/laws-and-regulations/laws/gina.

The Ill. Genetic Information Protection Act (GIPA) (410 ILCS 513/~~amended by P.A. 100-396~~) also prohibits employers from making employment decisions on the basis of any employee's genetic testing information and from penalizing employees who do not want to disclose their genetic information as part of a workplace wellness program. GIPA includes the federal GINA's definition of genetic information and creates more stringent obligations on Ill. employers. While the federal GINA exempts small employers (those with less than 15 employees), Illinois' GIPA covers all employers, even those with one employee. GIPA also provides penalties for negligent and intentional mishandling of genetic information. Note that Title II of GINA does not preempt GIPA's greater protections to Illinois employees.

Before using any sort of genetic information, consult the board attorney for guidance regarding GINA's and GIPA's specific applications to the district and how these laws integrate with other related federal laws, such as the Family and Medical Leave Act (29 U.S.C. §2612 *et seq.*) and the ADA, and State laws governing time off for sickness and workers' compensation.

¹³ 820 ILCS 70/. Unless a satisfactory credit history is an *established bona fide occupational requirement* of a particular position, an employer may not: (1) refuse to hire, discharge, or otherwise discriminate against an individual with respect to employment because of the individual's credit history or credit report; (2) inquire about an applicant's or employee's credit history; or (3) order or obtain an applicant's or employee's credit report from a consumer reporting agency. The Act identifies circumstances that permit a satisfactory credit history to be a job requirement, such as, when the position's duties include custody of or unsupervised access to cash or marketable assets valued at \$2,500 or more. [820 ILCS 70/10\(b\)](#). A person who is injured by a violation of this Act may bring a civil action to obtain injunctive relief and/or damages. 820 ILCS 70/25. The court must award costs and reasonable attorneys' fees to a prevailing plaintiff. [Id.](#)

¹⁴ The phrase "prompt and equitable resolution" comes from Title IX implementing regulation 34 C.F.R. §106.8(c) which requires schools to "adopt and publish grievance procedures that provide for the prompt and equitable resolution of student and employee complaints" of sex discrimination.

Deadlines

All deadlines under this policy may be extended by the Complaint Manager as he or she deems appropriate. As used in this policy, *school business days* means days on which the District's main office is open.

Filing a Complaint

A person (hereinafter Complainant) who wishes to avail him or herself of this grievance procedure may do so by filing a complaint with any District Complaint Manager. The Complainant shall not be required to file a complaint with a particular Complaint Manager and may request a Complaint Manager of the same gender.¹⁵ The Complaint Manager may request the Complainant to provide a written statement regarding the nature of the complaint or require a meeting with a student's parent(s)/guardian(s). The Complaint Manager shall assist the Complainant as needed.

For any complaint alleging bullying and/or cyberbullying of students, the Complaint Manager shall process and review the complaint according to Board policy 7:180, *Prevention of and Response to Bullying, Intimidation, and Harassment*, in addition to any response required by this policy. For any complaint alleging sexual harassment or other violation of Board policy 5:20, *Workplace Harassment Prohibited*, the Complaint Manager shall process and review the complaint according to that policy, in addition to any response required by this policy.

Investigation Process

The Complaint Manager will investigate the complaint or appoint a qualified person to undertake the investigation on his or her behalf.¹⁶ The Complaint Manager shall ensure both parties have an equal opportunity to present evidence during an investigation. If the Complainant is a student under 18 years of age, the Complaint Manager will notify his or her parents/guardians that they may attend any investigatory meetings in which their child is involved. The complaint and identity of the Complainant will not be disclosed except: (1) as required by law, ~~or this policy~~, or any collective bargaining agreement, (2) as necessary to fully investigate the complaint, or (3) as authorized by the Complainant.

The identity of any student witnesses will not be disclosed except: (1) as required by law, this policy, or any collective bargaining agreement, (2) as necessary to fully investigate the complaint, or (3) as authorized by the parent/guardian of the student witness, or by the student if the student is 18 years of age or older.

The Complaint Manager will inform, at regular intervals, the person(s) filing a complaint under this policy about the status of the investigation. Within 30 school business days after the date the complaint was filed, the Complaint Manager shall file a written report of his or her findings with the Superintendent. The Complaint Manager may request an extension of time.

The Superintendent will keep the Board informed of all complaints.

The footnotes are not intended to be part of the adopted policy; they should be removed before the policy is adopted.

¹⁵ This is a best practice.

¹⁶ This policy gives complaint managers the flexibility to appoint another individual to conduct an investigation, which may be appropriate in cases where the neutrality or efficacy of the complaint manager is an issue, and/or where the district wishes to have the expertise and related attorney-client and work product privileges that an in-house or outside attorney may afford an investigation. Such alternative appointments are often made in consultation with the superintendent or other district-level administrator (except in cases involving complaints about those individuals).

If a complaint contains allegations involving the Superintendent or Board member(s), the written report shall be filed directly with the Board, which will make a decision in accordance with paragraph four of the following section of this policy.

Decision and Appeal

Within five school business days after receiving the Complaint Manager's report, the Superintendent shall mail his or her written decision to the Complainant and the accused by ~~first-class U.S. mail~~ registered mail, return receipt requested, and/or personal delivery¹⁷ as well as to the Complaint Manager. All decisions shall be based upon the *preponderance of evidence* standard.¹⁸

Within 10 school business days after receiving the Superintendent's decision, the Complainant or the accused may appeal the decision to the Board by making a written request to the Complaint Manager. The Complaint Manager shall promptly forward all materials relative to the complaint and appeal to the Board.

Within 30 school business days after an appeal of the Superintendent's decision, the Board shall affirm, reverse, or amend the Superintendent's decision or direct the Superintendent to gather additional information. Within five school business days after the Board's decision, the Superintendent shall inform the Complainant and the accused of the Board's action.

For complaints containing allegations involving the Superintendent or Board member(s), within 30 school business days after receiving the Complaint Manager's or outside investigator's report, the Board shall mail its written decision to the Complainant and the accused by ~~first-class U.S. mail~~ registered mail, return receipt requested, and/or personal delivery¹⁹ as well as to the Complaint Manager.

This policy shall not be construed to create an independent right to a hearing before the Superintendent or Board. The failure to strictly follow the timelines in this grievance procedure shall not prejudice any party.²⁰

Appointing a Nondiscrimination Coordinator and Complaint Managers²¹

The Superintendent shall appoint a Nondiscrimination Coordinator to manage the District's efforts to provide equal opportunity employment and educational opportunities and prohibit the harassment of

The footnotes are not intended to be part of the adopted policy; they should be removed before the policy is adopted.

¹⁷ Optional: using a delivery method that allows the district to verify the date of receipt is a best practice.

¹⁸ *Preponderance of evidence* is a standard used in civil cases. It means "the greater weight of the evidence, not necessarily established by the greater number of witnesses testifying to a fact but by evidence that has the most convincing force." See *Black's Law Dictionary*, 11th ed. 2019.

¹⁹ See f/n 17, above.

²⁰ The Ill. sex equity regulations require districts to have "specific timelines for completion of each step and rendering of a written decision, and shall provide for final appeal of grievance decisions made at the system level to the system's governing board." 23 Ill.Admin.Code §200.40(c)(1). To avoid arguments over these timelines, this sample policy provides that the failure to strictly follow the timelines does not prejudice any party. The grievance procedure is worthless if complaints are not thoroughly and promptly investigated.

²¹ Title IX regulations require districts to designate and authorize at least one employee to coordinate efforts to comply with Title IX and to refer to that employee as the *Title IX Coordinator*. 34 C.F.R. §106.8(a). Districts must identify the Title IX coordinator by name, office address, email address, and telephone number. *Id.*

A district must prominently display its Title IX non-discrimination policies (this policy 2:260, *Uniform Grievance Procedure*, and sample policy 2:265, *Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Procedure*) and contact information for its Title

employees, students, and others. The Nondiscrimination Coordinator also serves as the District's Title IX Coordinator. ²²

The Superintendent shall appoint at least one Complaint Manager to administer this policy. If possible, the Superintendent will appoint two Complaint Managers, one of each gender. The District's Nondiscrimination Coordinator may be appointed as one of the Complaint Managers.

The Superintendent shall insert into this policy and keep current the names, office addresses, email addresses, and telephone numbers of the Nondiscrimination Coordinator and the Complaint Managers. ²³

Nondiscrimination Coordinator:

Name

Address

Email

Telephone

Complaint Managers:

| | |
|------------------|------------------|
| _____ Name | _____ Name |
| _____ Address | _____ Address |
| _____ Email | _____ Email |

The footnotes are not intended to be part of the adopted policy; they should be removed before the policy is adopted.

IX coordinator(s) on its website, if any, and in each handbook made available to students, applicants for employment, parents/guardians, employees, and collective bargaining units. 34 C.F.R. §106.8(a) and (b). Notifications must state that nondiscrimination extends to employment, and that inquiries about the application of Title IX and its regulations may be referred to the district's Title IX coordinator, to the U.S. Dept. of Education's Assistant Secretary of Education, or both. 34 C.F.R. §106.8(b). See sample exhibit 2:250-E2, *Immediately Available District Public Records and Web-Posted Reports and Records*.

While the names and contact information are required by law to be listed, they are not part of the adopted policy and do not require board action. This allows for additions and amendments to the names and contact information when necessary. It is important for updated names and contact information to be inserted into this policy and regularly monitored.

²² The Nondiscrimination and Title IX Coordinator(s) need not be the same person. If the district uses a separate Title IX Coordinator who does not also serve as the Nondiscrimination Coordinator, delete "~~The Nondiscrimination Coordinator also serves as the District's Title IX Coordinator.~~", insert a hard return to create a new paragraph, and insert "The Superintendent shall appoint a Title IX Coordinator to coordinate the District's efforts to comply with Title IX." Then, list the Title IX and Nondiscrimination Coordinators' names and contact information separately in this policy.

Best practice is that throughout the board policy manual, the same individual be named as Nondiscrimination Coordinator. In contrast, Complaint Managers identified in individual policies may vary depending upon local district needs.

²³ The board may include the following option to address publication of such contact information:

"The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that students, parents/guardians, employees, and members of the community are informed of the contact information for the District's Nondiscrimination Coordinator and Complaint Managers on an annual basis."

Publicizing the contact information for the Nondiscrimination Coordinator and Complaint Managers through personnel handbooks, student handbooks, and/or on the district's website is a best practice. The Illinois Principals Association (IPA) maintains a handbook service that coordinates with PRESS material, *Online Model Student Handbook (MSH)*, at: www.ilprincipals.org/resources/model-student-handbook.

Telephone

Telephone

LEGAL REF.:

[8 U.S.C. §1324a et seq., Immigration Reform and Control Act.](#)
[20 U.S.C. §1232g, Family Education Rights Privacy Act.](#)
[20 U.S.C. §1400, The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.](#)
[20 U.S.C. §1681 et seq., Title IX of the Education Amendments; 34 C.F.R. Part 106.](#)
[29 U.S.C. §206\(d\), Equal Pay Act.](#)[Age Discrimination in Employment Act,](#)
[29 U.S.C. §621 et seq., Age Discrimination in Employment Act.](#)
[29 U.S.C. §791 et seq., Rehabilitation Act of 1973.](#)
[29 U.S.C. §2612, Family and Medical Leave Act.](#)
[42 U.S.C. §2000d et seq., Title VI of the Civil Rights Act.](#)
[42 U.S.C. §2000e et seq., Equal Employment Opportunities Act \(Title VII of the Civil Rights Act\).](#)
[42 U.S.C. §2000ff et seq., Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act.](#)
[42 U.S.C. §11431 et seq., McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.](#)
~~Americans With Disabilities Act,~~ [42 U.S.C. §12101 et seq., Americans With Disabilities Act.](#)
~~Equal Employment Opportunities Act (Title VII of the Civil Rights Act),~~ [42 U.S.C. §2000e et seq.](#)
~~Equal Pay Act,~~ [29 U.S.C. §206\(d\).](#)
~~Immigration Reform and Control Act,~~ [8 U.S.C. §1324a et seq.](#)
[105 ILCS 5/2-3.8, 5/3-10, 5/10-20, 5/10-20.5, 5/10-20.7a, 5/10-20.60, 5/10-20.69 5/10-20.75 \(final citation pending\), 5/10-22.5, 5/22-19, 5/24-4, 5/27-1, 5/27-23.7, and 45/1-15.](#)
[5 ILCS 415/10\(a\)\(2\), Government Severance Pay Act.](#)
[5 ILCS 430/70-5\(a\), State Officials and Employees Ethics Act.](#)
~~Illinois Genetic Information Privacy Act,~~ [410 ILCS 513/, Ill. Genetic Information Privacy Act.](#)
~~Illinois Whistleblower Act,~~ [740 ILCS 174/, Whistleblower Act.](#)
[740 ILCS 175/, Ill. False Claims Act.](#)
~~Illinois Human Rights Act,~~ [775 ILCS 5/, Ill. Human Rights Act.](#)
~~Victims' Economic Security and Safety Act,~~ [820 ILCS 180/, Victims' Economic Security and Safety Act; 56 Ill.Admin.Code Part 280.](#)
~~Equal Pay Act of 2003,~~ [820 ILCS 112/, Equal Pay Act of 2003.](#)
~~Employee Credit Privacy Act,~~ [820 ILCS 70/, Employee Credit Privacy Act, 70/10\(b\), and 70/25.](#)
[23 Ill.Admin.Code §§1.240, -and-200.40, 226.50, and 226.570.](#)

CROSS REF.:

2:105 (Ethics and Gift Ban), 2:265 (Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Procedure), 5:10 (Equal Employment Opportunity and Minority Recruitment), 5:20 (Workplace Harassment Prohibited), 5:30 (Hiring Process and Criteria), 5:90 (Abused and Neglected Child Reporting), 6:120 (Education of Children with Disabilities), 6:140 (Education of Homeless Children), 6:170 (Title I Programs), 6:260 (Complaints About Curriculum, Instructional Materials, and Programs), 7:10 (Equal Educational Opportunities), 7:15 (Student and Family Privacy Rights), 7:20 (Harassment of Students Prohibited), 7:180 (Prevention of and Response to Bullying, Intimidation, and Harassment), 7:185 (Teen Dating Violence Prohibited), 7:310 (Restrictions on Publications; Elementary Schools), 7:315 (Restrictions on Publications; High Schools), 8:70 (Accommodating Individuals with Disabilities), 8:95 (Parental Involvement), 8:110 (Public Suggestions and Concerns)

School Board

Powers and Duties of the School Board; Indemnification

The major powers and duties of the School Board include, but are not limited to:

1. Organizing the Board after each consolidated election by electing officers and establishing its regular meeting schedule and, thereafter, taking action during lawfully called meetings to faithfully fulfill the Board's responsibilities in accordance with State and federal law. ¹
2. Formulating, adopting, and modifying Board policies, at its sole discretion, subject only to mandatory collective bargaining agreements and State and federal law. ²
3. Employing a Superintendent and other personnel, making employment decisions, dismissing personnel, including determining whether an employee has willfully or negligently failed to report an instance of suspected child abuse or neglect as required by 325 ILCS 5/,³ and establishing an equal employment opportunity policy that prohibits unlawful discrimination. ⁴
4. Directing, through policy, the Superintendent, in his or her charge of the District's administration. ⁵
5. Approving the annual budget, tax levies, major expenditures, payment of obligations, annual audit, and other aspects of the District's financial operation; and making available a statement of financial affairs as provided in State law. ⁶

The footnotes are not intended to be part of the adopted policy; they should be removed before the policy is adopted.

¹ State law controls this policy's content. School board powers listed in the School Code are not exclusive, meaning that a board may exercise "all other powers not inconsistent with this Act that may be requisite or proper for the maintenance, operation, and development of any school or schools under the jurisdiction of the board." 105 ILCS 5/10-20. This policy's intent is to list the *major* statutory powers and duties – not all of them. See also 105 ILCS 5/10-20.5 and 5/10-21.

For power/duty #1, see 105 ILCS 5/10-16 and 5/10-16.5 and policies 2:80, *Board Member Oath and Conduct*, and 2:210, *Organizational School Board Meeting*. Boards that elect officers for one-year terms and/or hold organizational meetings yearly, replace the default text in number 1 with the following:

Annually organizing the Board by electing officers and establishing its regular meeting schedule and, thereafter, taking action during lawfully called meetings to faithfully fulfill the Board's responsibilities in accordance with Board policy and State and federal law.

² 105 ILCS 5/10-20.5 and policy 2:240, *Board Policy Development*; 105 ILCS 5/10-21; and 115 ILCS 5/, III. Educational Labor Relations Act.

³ 105 ILCS 5/10-23.12(c), added by P.A. 101-531; 105 ILCS 5/21B-75(b), amended by P.A.s 101-531 and 102-552. For further discussion see f/n 22 in policy 5:90, *Abused and Neglected Child Reporting*. **Note:** While 105 ILCS 5/10-23.12(c) permits boards to *immediately* dismiss certain employees upon the determination that he or she has willfully or negligently failed to report, this does not negate a board's responsibility to provide employees with due process required by the law and district policies and procedures. Consult the board attorney for further guidance.

⁴ 105 ILCS 5/10-21.4 (employing superintendent); 5/10-20.7 and 5/10-21.1 (teachers); 5/10-21.9 (criminal history records checks); 5/10-22.34 (non-certificated personnel (this statute still uses *certificated* rather than *licensed*)); 5/10-22.4 (dismissing teachers for cause); and 5/10-23.5 and 5/24-12 (reduction in force). See policies in the **PRESS** Policy Reference Manual Sections 3, General School Administration, and 5, Personnel.

⁵ 105 ILCS 5/10-16.7.

6. Entering contracts using the public bidding procedure when required. ⁷
7. Providing, constructing, controlling, and maintaining adequate physical facilities; making school buildings available for use as civil defense shelters; and establishing a resource conservation policy. ⁸
8. Establishing an equal educational opportunities policy that prohibits unlawful discrimination. ⁹
9. Approving the curriculum, textbooks, and educational services. ¹⁰
10. Evaluating the educational program and approving School Improvement and District Improvement Plans. ¹¹
11. Presenting the District report card and School report card(s) to parents/guardians and the community; these documents report District, School, and student performance. ¹²
12. Establishing and supporting student behavior policies designed to maintain an environment conducive to learning, including deciding individual student suspension or expulsion cases brought before it. ¹³
13. Establishing attendance units within the District and assigning students to the schools. ¹⁴
14. Establishing the school year. ¹⁵
15. Requiring a moment of silence to recognize veterans during any type of school event held at a District school on November 11. ¹⁶
16. Providing student transportation services pursuant to State law. ¹⁷
17. Entering into joint agreements with other boards to establish cooperative educational programs or provide educational facilities. ¹⁸

The footnotes are not intended to be part of the adopted policy; they should be removed before the policy is adopted.

⁶ 105 ILCS 5/10-20.19 and 5/17-1 *et seq.* See policies in the PRESS Policy Reference Manual Section 4, Operational Services.

⁷ 105 ILCS 5/10-20.21. See policy 4:60, *Purchases and Contracts*.

⁸ For the first clause, see 105 ILCS 5/10-20.6, 5/10-20.12, 5/10-22.10, 5/10-22.35A, and 5/10-22.36; and policy 4:150, *Facility Management and Building Programs*. For the second clause, see 105 ILCS 5/10-22.35. For the third clause, see 105 ILCS 5/10-20.19c and policy 4:70, *Resource Conservation*.

⁹ Many civil rights laws guarantee equal educational opportunities; see policy 7:10, *Equal Educational Opportunities*.

¹⁰ 105 ILCS 5/10-20.8. See policies in the PRESS Policy Reference Manual Section 6, Instruction.

¹¹ 105 ILCS 5/2-3.25d, which addressed school and district improvement plans, was repealed by P.A. 100-1046. 105 ILCS 5/2-3.25f, and 105 ILCS 5/27-1. For more specific information about school and district improvement plans, see policy 6:10, *Educational Philosophy and Objectives*, and f/n 6 in policy 6:15, *School Accountability*.

¹² 105 ILCS 5/10-17a, ~~amended by P.A.s 100-364, 100-465, 100-807, 100-863, 100-1121, and 101-68~~. This statute details the requirements for *presenting* the district report card and school report card(s), including presenting them at a regular school board meeting and posting them on the district's website.

¹³ 105 ILCS ~~5/10-20.14 and 5/10-22.6~~, ~~amended by P.A.s 100-105, 100-810, and 100-1035~~. See policies 7:190, *Student Behavior*; 7:200, *Suspension Procedures*; and 7:210, *Expulsion Procedures*.

¹⁴ 105 ILCS 5/10-21.3 and 5/10-22.5. See policy 7:30, *Student Assignment and Intra-District Transfer*.

¹⁵ 105 ILCS 5/10-19, amended by P.A.s ~~100-465, 101-12, and 101-643~~, ~~and~~ 23 Ill.Admin.Code §1.420. See policy 6:20, *School Year Calendar and Day*.

¹⁶ Recognizing veterans on Nov. 11 is required by 105 ILCS 5/10-20.46.

¹⁷ 105 ILCS 5/10-22.22. See policy 4:110, *Transportation*.

18. Complying with requirements in the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act (ANCRA). Specifically, each individual Board member must, if an allegation is raised to the member during an open or closed Board meeting that a student is an abused child as defined in ANCRA, direct or cause the Board to direct the Superintendent or other equivalent school administrator to comply with ANCRA's requirements concerning the reporting of child abuse. ¹⁹
19. Notifying the State Superintendent of Education promptly and in writing of the name of a licensed teacher who was convicted of a felony, along with the conviction and the name and location of the court where the conviction occurred. ²⁰
20. Notifying the Teachers' Retirement System (TRS) of the State of Ill. Board of Trustees promptly and in writing when it learns that a teacher as defined in the Ill. Pension Code was convicted of a felony, along with the name and location of the court where the conviction occurred, and the case number assigned by that court to the conviction. ²¹
- 19-21. Communicating the schools' activities and operations to the community and representing the needs and desires of the community in educational matters. ²²

Indemnification ²³

To the extent allowed by law, the Board shall defend, indemnify, and hold harmless School Board members, employees, volunteer personnel (pursuant to 105 ILCS 5/10-22.34, 10-22.34a and 10-22.34b), mentors of certified staff (pursuant to 105 ILCS 5/2-3.53a, 2-3.53b, and 105 ILCS 5/21A-5 et seq.), and student teachers who, in the course of discharging their official duties imposed or authorized by law, are sued as parties in a legal proceeding. Nothing herein, however, shall be construed as obligating the Board to defend, indemnify, or hold harmless any person who engages in criminal activity, official misconduct, fraud, intentional or willful and wanton misconduct, or acts beyond the authority properly vested in the individual.

The footnotes are not intended to be part of the adopted policy; they should be removed before the policy is adopted.

¹⁸ 105 ILCS 5/10-22.31a. See policy 1:20, *District Organization, Operations, and Cooperative Agreements*.

¹⁹ 325 ILCS 5/4(d), amended by P.A. 101-564. Abuse and neglect are defined in 325 ILCS 5/3: ~~For an disabled adult student with a disability~~ see 20 ILCS 1305/1-17(b). While board members are not required to take mandated reporter training provided by the Ill. Dept. of Children and Family Services (DCFS), being familiar with ANCRA's definition of an abused child and how mandated reporting works enables board members to better meet their duty under 325 ILCS 5/4(d). Board members may learn about ANCRA by taking DCFS mandated reporter training (available to anyone online at: <https://mr.dcfstraining.org>) or IASB's ANCRA course (available in the Online Learning center at: www.iasb.com).

²⁰ 105 ILCS 5/21B-85(a).

²¹ Id. at 5/21B-85(b), amended by P.A. 102-552.

²² See policy 8:10, *Connection with the Community*.

²³ 105 ILCS 5/10-20.20 (duty to indemnify) and 5/10-22.3 (duty to insure against loss or liability). These statutes identify the same individuals for protection except that the indemnification statute includes mentors of certified staff members. See f/n 3 in policy 4:100, *Insurance Management*.

Public officials or employees who are sued or incur loss because of the performance of their duties imposed or authorized by law on behalf of the public entity are entitled to indemnification. McQuillan on Municipal Corporations §12.137 (3rd ed. 1973). Public employees who must defend themselves in actions based upon the performance of official duties are entitled to indemnification. Wayne Twp. Bd. of Auditors v. Ludwig, 154 Ill.App.3d 899 (2nd Dist. 1987). The public's interest is served by indemnifying public officials and employees in the performance of their official duties in order to recruit and retain qualified public employees and officials.

LEGAL REF.: 105 ILCS 5/10, 5/17-1, 5/21B-85, and 5/27-1.
115 ILCS 5/, Ill. Educational Labor Relations Act.
325 ILCS 5/, Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act.

CROSS REF.: 1:10 (School District Legal Status), 1:20 (District Organization, Operations, and Cooperative Agreements), 2:10 (School District Governance), 2:80 (Board Member Oath and Conduct), 2:140 (Communications To and From the Board), 2:210 (Organizational School Board Meeting), 2:240 (Board Policy Development), 4:60 (Purchases and Contracts), 4:70 (Resource Conservation), 4:100 (Insurance Management), 4:110 (Transportation), 4:150 (Facility Management and Building Programs), 4:165 (Awareness and Prevention of Sexual Abuse and Grooming Behaviors), 4:175 (Convicted Child Sex Offender: Screening: Notifications), 5:10 (Equal Employment Opportunity and Minority Recruitment), 5:30 (Hiring Process and Criteria), 5:90 (Abused and Neglected Child Reporting), 5:120 (Employee Ethics: Conduct; and Conflict of Interest), 5:150 (Personnel Records), 5:210 (Resignations), 5:290 (Employment Termination and Suspensions), 6:10 (Educational Philosophy and Objectives), 6:15 (School Accountability), 6:20 (School Year Calendar and Day), 7:10 (Equal Educational Opportunities), 7:30 (Student Assignment and Intra-District Transfer), 7:190 (Student Behavior), 7:200 (Suspension Procedures), 7:210 (Expulsion Procedures), 8:10 (Connection with the Community), 8:30 (Visitors to and Conduct on School Property)