



HOW TO SPEAK EFFECTIVELY AT YOUR LOCAL SCHOOL BOARD MEETING:

STEP ONE - SIGN-UP

Go onto your school board website and find out what their sign-up process looks like. This is dependent on the district. Some meetings are virtual or only allow comments virtually. For virtual meetings, you can typically sign up through a “public comment request form” on the district website. For districts that allow public attendance and comment, you typically must sign up in person before the meeting. Doors typically open 1 hour before the meeting starts.

Find out when and where the meeting is taking place. Usually meetings are held at a specific school in the district or at the district office.

STEP TWO - REVIEW THE BOARD AGENDA

One way that school boards are trying to suppress parents is to limit public comments to what is on the pre-approved school board meeting agenda. Make sure you know your board’s policies and if you are limited to speaking on a pre-approved topic, focus on one of those topics. Research the agenda to get a better understanding of when you can comment on issues you feel most passionate about. If the board is not discussing mask mandates, vaccines, or Critical Race Theory, you might have to wait until the end of the meeting. Normally, school boards allow a public comment time for any district-relevant topics at the end of their meeting, regardless of what topics are on the official agenda.

STEP THREE - SET A GOAL

Go into the meeting knowing what you want to share with the board and have a predetermined goal of how to communicate your concerns.

➤ *Talk about one issue so the board is clear on your intentions and your points are focused.*
Focus on topics such as:

- Why are mask mandates being implemented?
- Why do you support Critical Race Theory?
- Why do you NOT support school choice?

➤ *Talk about one issue so the board is clear on your intentions and your points are focused.*
Focus on topics such as:

- Talk about how the school boards have failed to put children first, not rhetorically asking why they are passing CRT curricula.

➤ *If there is a specific topic that is REALLY relevant at the moment, look into speaking about it.*

- Why did you vote to implement a vaccine mandate for children?
- Why do you support Critical Race Theory or similar policies?

STEP FOUR - RESEARCH

Research the specific topic you decided to speak on. The best way to feel more comfortable about your speech is if you have put in the effort to make it impactful. Once you have the research and an idea of what you want to say, write it down and start drafting your speech.

 ***Be sure to research the open comments time limit beforehand. Typically speakers during the public comment phase are given anywhere from two to three minutes. Draft your comments to fit within that time frame.***

There is no shame in having a speech written out and being able to reference it throughout your speech.

HAVE STATISTICS... and offer solutions rather than strictly being critical and emotional.

STEP FIVE - PRACTICE

PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE. You will feel much more prepared if you have the speech memorized.

Read it to a spouse, friend, co-worker, etc. Make sure it sounds professional and your point is made respectfully. Sharing your speech with someone else helps to make sure it is the best possible speech it can be.

Most districts only allow two to three minute speeches, so make it brief and to the point.

STEP SIX - THE BOARD MEETING

Some districts require you to sign up ahead of time online in order to speak. If this is the case, make sure you sign up through the school district's website.

Other districts require in-person sign ups, typically an hour before the meeting. If you show up too late, all speaking slots may be taken.

Once you are signed up, whether in person or online, the only thing left to do is wait.

STEP SEVEN - GIVING YOUR SPEECH

EYE CONTACT... It is okay to reference your speech, but try to maintain eye contact with the board members.

Don't focus on the clock, focus on your delivery. It is more important to speak clearly and effectively than focus on the time restrictions.

Be brief and to the point. This will keep the audience involved and interested, while also driving home your message with the board members.

Thank the board for their time and attention.

OTHER IMPORTANT REMINDERS:

BE PROFESSIONAL! It is great to show passion, but yelling and being disrespectful will only harm your intentions.

Treat other speakers, even if they have differing views, with respect. Treat them how you want to be treated.

The only way to make an impact is to participate and be active. As Americans, it is our duty to stand for our beliefs and make our voices heard!

Remember... The school board works for YOU!

LEARN MORE AT SCHOOLBOARDWATCHLIST.ORG