



# **SPEAKING AT A SCHOOL BOARD MEETING CHECKLIST**

# **Taking an active role in our children's education is essential.**

School board meetings are on-the-record public forums where policy is discussed and made—from curriculum to staffing to student-focused policies. One of the most direct ways to partner with educators and hold them publicly accountable is to attend school board meetings regularly, volunteer, participate in the decision-making process, and voice your opinions to the elected representatives who serve on the school board.



# Before the Meeting

## RESEARCH THE TOPICS

- **Find the Agenda:** Online or at the district office. School board meeting dates and times are typically pre-scheduled, usually monthly. Knowing what's on the agenda helps you track issues and align your comments with the topics slated to be discussed at each meeting.

## CRAFT YOUR MESSAGE

- **Identify Key Issues:** Vague complaints (e.g., "This district doesn't appreciate America") are not usually well received. Try to be specific (e.g., "The American flag was removed on \*DATE\* and replaced with a flag that many regard as divisive"). Stay focused on a single topic when making your public comment.
- **Be Fact-Based:** Provide factual evidence and examples to support your viewpoint (i.e., sub-par district-wide test scores, declining school ratings, proficiency levels, read alouds of age-inappropriate materials, etc.).
- **Prepare a Statement:** Keep it concise—write it down so you may read from it.

## KNOW THE RULES

- **Time Limit:** Typically, you'll have 2-5 minutes to speak (depending on district, subject matter, and meeting attendance). Speaker time limits are usually found on the school district's website and/or announced at the meeting.
- **Sign-Up Procedures:** Some boards require advance sign-ups to speak; know the cut-off date and process. This can usually be found online.

# At the Meeting

## DRESS APPROPRIATELY

- **Professional Attire:** Dressing respectfully conveys that you take the meeting seriously.

## REGISTER TO SPEAK

- **Sign-In:** There is often a sign-up sheet for those wishing to speak. Make sure you arrive early enough to put your name on it.

## SPEAKING TIPS

- **Be Respectful:** Start by thanking the board for the opportunity to speak.
- **State Your Name and Affiliation:** This could include that you're a parent, taxpayer, or concerned citizen.
- **Stick to the Point:** You only have a short amount of time; use it wisely to focus on 1-2 key points.
- **Provide Facts and Evidence:** Stick to facts that concern students and/or families. Avoid personal attacks toward school board members, teachers, and administrative staff.
- **Call for Action:** Urge the board to vote a certain way and/or take specific action(s) that can be reviewed and measured over time.
- **Keep It Public:** Stay committed to submitting comments and/or suggestions in a public forum. Private meetings with school board and district representatives sound productive, but public transparency is ideal for progress.

# After the Meeting

## FOLLOW UP

- **Send a Thank-You Note:** Whether or not the board agrees with you, it's courteous to send a note thanking them for their time after the meeting.
- **Stay Informed and Active:** Review meeting minutes and future agendas to see if your issue will be discussed again. Change doesn't happen with one school board meeting—progress requires repeat engagement.
- **Public Communication:** Try to keep follow-up communication in a public forum setting—elected officials are often held more accountable in public arenas. Speaking again, at the next meeting, is an ideal way to follow up and keep issues relevant.
- **Repeat Involvement:** Consistent engagement is more effective than making an isolated, noisy complaint before voting happens and/or a decision is made on an issue. Keep asking questions and petitioning for decisions.

## ENGAGE WITH LIKE-MINDED PARENTS

- **Build a Coalition:** If the board doesn't side with you, create or join a group of like-minded parents to advocate for your cause.
- **Organize Others:** Encourage more parents to join you at future meetings—as a speaker, by submitting an online comment, through letters to the editor of your local newspaper, as a participant at in-person group meetings at the district office, and more. There is power in numbers.
- **Use Social Media:** Amplify transparency and reasonable cause for your action through varied media platforms. Refrain from personal attacks and always be respectful.

# Additional Resources

- **Robert's Rules of Order:** This guide to parliamentary procedure can help you understand the flow of meetings.
- **Local Like-minded Groups:** Many areas have organizations that offer resources, facts, and statistics for supporting parental rights and advocating for American values in schools.

Your informed advocacy and civil action at school board meetings can effect positive change that unifies parents and teachers to educate children with knowledge, rather than propel politics. Making your voice heard might feel intimidating at first, but courage is contagious. Our educational system was not compromised overnight, but it can be restored if reasonable parents continue to bravely unite in an effort to guide the upbringing and education of our children.



**Find more parent resources at  
[PragerUkids.com](https://PragerUkids.com).**