

TIPS FOR SPEAKING AT SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS

Every local school district is governed by a school board. School board members are often elected with the intent to put the interests of their community's youth first. School boards must post notice of meetings at least 72 hours before the scheduled time of the meeting. Speaking in front of the school board can be very effective. Bring along as many other parents, students, and community members as you can. Not everyone needs to speak, the turnout supporting you is also effective.

- **When and Where and How.** School boards meet regularly to discuss issues and make decisions, typically the same time and place at least once a month. School boards must post notice of meetings at least 72 hours before the scheduled time of the meeting. Try attending a meeting just to observe. Sometimes school boards have current or prior meetings posted online. Get an idea of when public comment usually happens and how it works.
- **Register to Speak.** You will have to register to speak, this usually happens when the meeting agenda is posted. There is usually a deadline to sign up. There is often two ways to speak: one is on a specific agenda item, the other is during a community section (sometimes called “hearing of the community”).
- **Give them facts.** School board members may not know very much about immunizations or even the vaccination rates in the district. Give them data and facts they can use as they make decisions. After your speech you can email the numbers and information to them.
- **Practice your speech.** Jot down notes or write the whole speech. Then practice what you are going to say. Community member input is usually limited to two or three minutes.
- **Offer solutions.** If there is a problem, then take some time to propose alternatives. Low-cost ideas are good options for the board to consider.
- **Follow-up.** Follow up with a letter thanking the board for their time and reminding them about your talking points and anything discussed at the meeting.