



# School Board Advocacy: 5 Tips for Parents

Your local school board makes many decisions that can affect your child's education, such as approving the school district's budget and allocating state funding for things like teacher training on a specific topic. Parents can influence these decisions by speaking up. Use these tips to get started.

## 1. Take some time to learn what your school board meetings are like.

Try to go to a board meeting or two so you can see how the meetings are structured. It's also a good idea to sign up for the board's email list. School boards have to post the agenda for each meeting, and knowing which topics will be discussed can help you get ready to speak.

## 2. Look for an ally on the board.

Before you raise an issue at a meeting, try to find a board member who is especially interested in things like engaging parents or meeting students' needs. (One way to do this is to read news stories about board elections or meetings.) Most districts post each member's contact information online.

## 3. Look for other parents to join you in speaking up.

Seek out local parents whose kids have similar challenges. Encourage them to join you in speaking up about a particular issue. Here are some groups that could help you find supportive parents:

- Your district's special education parent committee (often called SEPAC, SECAC or SEPTA)
- Local dyslexia support groups
- Parent organizations like your school's PTA or PTO and neighborhood or cultural groups

[Understood's online community](#) may have more ideas on how to find parents in your area.

## 4. Consider reaching out to a local teachers' group.

Many schools encourage teachers to develop professional learning communities (PLCs). These groups help teachers collaborate and learn from each other. PLCs are likely to be interested in efforts to get more resources or training to help teachers better support their students.

## 5. Prepare your remarks.

Find out how long you'll get to speak at the meeting, and practice your remarks using a timer. Bring the issue to life by talking about your child. It's also good to try to include a statistic on how many kids are affected. One helpful source of stats is NCLD's 2017 [State of Learning Disabilities](#) report. If you know other people who are planning to speak, you can plan together to make sure key points are covered. Let the board know if anyone needs an interpreter or needs board materials translated.