



School Board Candidate Toolkit



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DEAR SCHOOL BOARD CANDIDATE,

Over the last two years, we have witnessed first hand the importance of electing the right school board members to office. It is critical that we have pro-parent and pro-American school board members making decisions for our students. School boards single handedly hold power over our rights as parents, and control the purse strings to our children's educational future more than any other elected official. Yet, up until this past year, school board elections have been swept under the radar.

Parents have been ignored long enough. To transform local school systems across the country, we must identify and elect like-minded board members. The responsibility is all of ours to elect individuals who have our children's best interests at heart. Building Education for Students Together is actively engaged in recruiting, training, and educating the community about local school board candidates who understand that parents are the final authority in their children's education.

With FreedomWorks' BEST School Board Candidate Academy, we are dedicated to ensuring that these power-hungry incumbents are unseated and that we return the power back to parents. Our goal is to remove the obstacles and give you the tools necessary to launch a winning campaign. In addition to this comprehensive School Board Candidate Toolkit, I invite you to join us for the BEST 6-week school board candidate academy training that comprehensively covers the areas you will use to build a winning campaign. Please sign up at www.parentsknowbest.com to participate in these live online (free) trainings.

I encourage you to take your place in this parent-led movement because together, we can take back our parental rights one candidate at a time and one seat at a time.

Best,



Director of Education Reform

★ *FreedomWorks*



MISSION STATEMENT & PLAN OF ACTION

Building Education for Students Together's mission is to ignite a national parent-led movement by building, educating, and mobilizing the largest network of parent activists in the country to advocate for their children's education through the election of school board members and the passage of policies that align with our vision of expanding education freedom.

To achieve our mission, BEST is committed to creating a long-term impact through grassroots outreach by mobilizing our network of parent activists across the country with the purpose of:

1. uniting into state-based parent coalitions to protect parents' rights to be their children's primary educators; and
2. equipping them with the tools to give not only their child but every child in their community the best opportunities possible.

FOCUS AREAS

1. PARENT-LED COALITIONS

Parents are the only force large enough to impact our education system in the long term. BEST will build and empower state specific parent-led coalitions to realize this reform. These coalitions will engage in local and state policy issues to enhance parents' rights and create opportunities for their children.

2. EDUCATION FREEDOM

Competition breeds excellence, but teachers unions are determined to protect the government education system's status quo. It is essential to give parents a choice to determine the best learning environment for their children. This choice is achieved by ensuring that the funding follows the students, whether they attend private school, homeschool, charter schools, or public schools. BEST will continue to work state by state to introduce and support Education Savings Accounts, Tax Credit Scholarships, and voucher programs. Over the years, we've seen parents and students around the country forced into underperforming school districts with no room for alternatives. Each student brings unique capabilities and learning styles into the classroom, and the current one-size-fits-all approach leaves them underserved. We must protect and promote school choice to provide students with greater opportunities.

3. ANTI-AMERICAN CONTENT

Critical race theory, The 1619 Project, and Common Core standards have paved the way for biased, anti-American, subjective curricula. With a decline in students' reading on grade level and increased high school dropout rates, it is more important than ever to get back

to teaching the basics and spend less time socially engineering children with vicious, destructive propaganda. We must counter the anti-American narrative by regaining local control of the curriculum through parent involvement, legislative action, transparent textbook and content adoption, and the election of high-quality school board members, district by district.

4. CANDIDATES

Parents have been ignored long enough. To transform local school systems across the country, we must identify and elect like-minded board members. It is all of our responsibility to elect individuals who have our children's best interests at heart. BEST is actively engaged in recruiting, training, and educating the community about local school board candidates who understand that parents are the final authority in their children's education.



BEST SCHOOL BOARD CANDIDATE TOOLKIT

Running an election campaign can be a daunting prospect. Before you become a candidate, you must first understand what it takes to be a successful member of the board. Secondly, you must be ready to fully commit to the role. For many, a school board position is viewed as a part-time job. However, to be successful, you must not look at it that way. Being a school board member is a serious obligation, and in order to be effective, you must be willing to invest the time needed. The conventional thinking is to view it as a part time position, but you, as a good potential school board member, have to think beyond the “box” in which school board members have been placed and beyond all the misunderstandings and limitations within which the system wants to keep you.

A better way of thinking is: being a school board member is a part-time job with a full-time commitment. To be successful, you must be willing to work long hours when necessary and show up when they don't want you there. There are a multitude of committee meetings and events going on in the district on a regular basis - show up, learn, and listen to the discussions taking place. Boards have ceded their authority over to the superintendent and administrators for far too long. It's time to regain control of our school districts. The only way that can happen is if there are school board members willing to invest the time to do the work needed to fully understand the materials and content being discussed and brought to the board for a vote.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW TO BE AN INFORMED SCHOOL BOARD CANDIDATE

Perhaps the greatest issue plaguing parental rights in education is the fact that many school board members either don't know or have been woefully misinformed as to what their responsibilities are. They roll over to administrators and the teachers union out of naivete or the belief that they are agents of the superintendent, when in reality they are the superintendent's boss. Administrators take advantage of docile school boards and run roughshod over parental rights because the individuals meant to represent parents and taxpayers, school board members, are shirking their responsibilities.

REQUIRED RESEARCH:

- › How are elections run in your district?
- › Where do you file your candidacy?
- › In what district do you live?
- › When does qualifying begin and end?
- › When is the date of your school board election?
- › Is the school board member in your district re-electable?

TIME REQUIREMENTS OF A SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER

To be successful, you must approach the position with real expectations of a part-time job with a full-time commitment.



REALISTIC TIME EXPECTATION FOR A SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER

- ✓ 15 to 20 hours a week depending on size of district.
- ✓ Serving on a local school board requires **flexibility**.
- ✓ Expect emergency meetings with the superintendent and phone calls from constituents at all hours.
- ✓ Board business meetings are voted on by the board during an organizational meeting.
- ✓ Special called meetings & workshops TBD throughout the year.
- ✓ The first year on the board will require you to invest the most time familiarizing yourself with all aspects of the district. The goal is to have of enough knowledge to approve a fiscal responsible budget.
- ✓ Springtime and the end of the school year is the busiest time for school board members with graduation ceremonies and budget meetings.



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THE ROLES OF A SCHOOL BOARD

School Boards are, simply put, the body of elected officials in charge of overseeing the administration of schools (handled day-to-day by the superintendent) and voting on school policy changes. School boards, regardless of the state you reside in, all share certain responsibilities, like:

1. Setting academic goals & district priorities
2. Establishing policy for the school district
3. Hiring & holding the superintendent accountable
4. Establishing and approving the Annual Budget
5. Approving contracts, grants, and budget amendments
6. Public Relations - the connection between the school system and constituents

These responsibilities are the practical jobs of a school board member. However, there is much more that goes into being a school board member than just these. Generally, a school board member's authority can be defined in three ways: Legislative, Executive, and Quasi-Judicial. We will talk in more detail about each in the following sections.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

The School Board acts as the legislative body of the school district. The members debate and vote on school district policies and the annual budget. As a unicameral legislature, the school board's legislative power is extensive and its most important function. Below is a non-exhaustive list of important parts of the School Board's legislative authority:

1. Rulemaking - determining policies and programs, adopting rules, and prescribing and adopting standards.
2. Designating positions and qualifications
3. Adopting the budget and levying taxes
4. Authorizing bonds and other debt
5. Establishing terms and conditions of employment for all staff

In their legislative function, the school board acts as a voting body. Generally, each member gets one vote - including the board's chairman. It is through a majority vote that the board sets policy, makes rule changes, and decides on the superintendent's recommendations.

EXECUTIVE AUTHORITY

The executive authority of a school district is, primarily, the responsibility of a superintendent. Still, the school board acts as a check on the superintendent and exercises administrative authority in key areas. The board, in its power to oversee the budget, allows a superintendent to have some discretionary authority on spending up to a certain amount, for example. The board may decide through policy what that amount of discretionary spending is.

THE ROLES OF A SUPERINTENDENT

When School Boards cede their authority to superintendents, the results can be disastrous for parental rights. Therefore, it is essential that you know what issues are under the purview of the school board vs. the superintendent. The most important thing to remember is that the school board hires and fires superintendents (via a majority vote and, in the case of firing, with cause).

The executive authority in a school district resides primarily with the superintendent, who is sometimes referred to as the “chief executive officer” of the district. Simply put, the superintendent is given authority to manage the day-to-day running of the school district. He or she is the head of the administration for the entire school district.

The power of a superintendent is NOT, however, absolute. For example, the final say when it comes to new spending and budgets lies with the school board, as does the amount of discretionary spending the superintendent is given. The superintendent advises and counsels the school board on all educational matters, as policy-making power ultimately rests with the school board.

Only the superintendent can manage the day-to-day operations of the district, and only the board can identify the expectations for the district through its policies. Boards that micromanage are working outside of their policy-making role. Superintendents who macro-manage are superseding the governance role of the board.

IN SUMMATION:

↓ SUPERINTENDENT	SCHOOL BOARD ↓
<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ The superintendent works for the board.✓ The superintendent serves as the board's chief adviser on educational matters and as the district's educational leader.✓ Developing administrative procedures necessary to manage the district's day-to-day affairs properly and in conformity with board policy is the responsibility of the superintendent.✓ Should ensure sufficient information is provided to the board so it is able to make informed decisions and evaluate the results of those decisions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ The board has authority to hire and fire the superintendent.✓ The school board is the final authority in the district.✓ Since the school board can only act as a group it confers to the superintendent sufficient legal authority to implement the board's policies and run the day-to-day operations of the district.✓ School board members should meet with Superintendent on a "scheduled" regular basis to discuss agenda items and board matters.✓ The superintendent should consult with the board before making any final determination on educational issues affecting the district.



HOW THE BOARD MEETINGS ARE RUN

The Board President/Chairman runs business meetings according to a modified form of Roberts Rules of Order. The President/Chairman sets the tone of the meeting. The superintendent acts as advisor to the board and will introduce each agenda item.

Board members may ask questions for clarification or an explanation of the facts. They may wish to discuss the issues, debate or share opinions and ideas.

AGENDA

The board agenda best practices is to be available before each board meeting and typically can be obtained at the school district office and web site. The agenda is divided into three major categories:

CONSENT AGENDA

A consent agenda consists of routine items such as previous board minutes, routine personnel actions and routine financial transactions. Normally, there is little or no discussion on these items.

ACTION ITEMS

Action items are addressed individually by the board and may include reports from district administrators.

BOARD DISCUSSION ITEMS AND REPORTS

Board discussion items and reports are presented for the board's information and require no formal action.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Most states have open meeting laws or Sunshine Law that requires all acts and deliberations of boards of education be conducted in public meetings. The exception is called executive session, where board members confer privately. No action of any kind can be taken during the executive session.

Topics vary per state but may include: personnel matters, property purchase for public purposes, pending or imminent court action, negotiations with employees, matters to be kept confidential by federal or state statutes and specialized details of security arrangements.

SCHOOL BOARD BUDGET PROCESS

First thing's first: why make a budget? Well, a budget outlines for a school district administration how much it can spend and in what time frame. The power to approve the budget is one of the most important given to a school board. Having a well-crafted budget is essential to planning the future of the district, keeping the public informed, addressing potential legal issues, controlling district revenue, and evaluating district performance.

There are 5 major steps related to a school district's budget. They are:

1. Development of budgetary guidelines, informed by: school board priorities, district policy, the size of the budget, state law, and schedule of events for the upcoming year
2. Preparation of the budget document
3. Modification of and amending the budget document
4. Approval of the budget (by school board vote)
5. Management of the budget

PURPOSES AND USES OF THE SCHOOL DISTRICT BUDGET

PLANNING

The budget serves as the principal planning system of a school district. A School District budget needs to support the board's strategic plan, the district's priorities, and the mission of education.

During this stage, the district plans:

- › Educational programs
- › How much these programs will cost
- › Services offered to students
- › District office activities
- › Resources needed

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The budget serves as a transparent, public document for review and approval that outlines the district's educational and fiscal plan. In some states, public comment or even public votes are required when approving a new budget. As a school board member, you can become an asset for parents and stakeholders seeking access to this budget information.

LEGAL

Once the budget is approved, it functions as a legal document. It is the legal basis by which school administrators can dispense public funds. The approved budget grants the superintendent the authority to expend revenues derived from local, state, and federal dollars as described in the budget.

CONTROL

During the operating year (fiscal year) the budget serves as a management control document. Adhering to the budget and school board supervision holds the superintendent, department heads, and principals accountable.

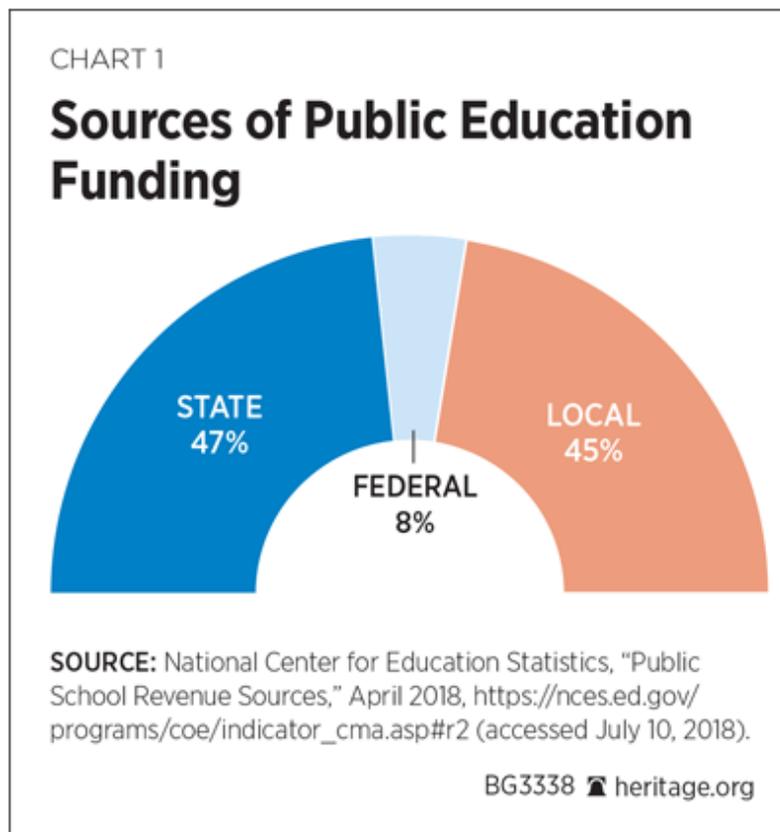
EVALUATIONS

The approved budget document allows the school board to evaluate the performance of the district and, most importantly, the superintendent. School boards can identify how closely the budget was followed, amounts that are over or under budget, and whether the budget follows state and federal laws.

SCHOOL BOARD FINANCE BASICS

REVENUES

Revenues in a school district come from a combination of Local, State, and Federal sources. Nationwide, almost half (47%) of school districts' funding comes from local sources, another 45% comes from the relevant state, and the final 8% comes from the federal government.



The local funding of your school district is funded primarily through property taxes, and goes directly to the district based on whatever percentage of those taxes are allocated for schools. Federal funding is often program-specific and earmarked for certain uses, and can be specifically tied to a certain federal education title. State education funding is more plentiful than federal funding and less tied to specific uses. Different states allocate their education funding to districts using different structures, outlined on the next page:

Title I used to be called Chapter One.

- » **Part A** provides basic grants for school improvement.
- » **Part B** focuses on helping schools improve their reading programs.
- » **Part C** provides funding for a variety of purposes, including advanced placement programs and dropout prevention.
- › **TITLE II** provides funding to prepare, train, and recruit high-quality teachers and principals. It also includes grants to integrate technology into the classroom.
- › **TITLE III** provides funding for language instruction for English learner (EL) and immigrant students. This funding is on top of any Title I funding a school might receive. It includes specific assessment and parent notification requirements.
- › **TITLE IV** provides grants for out-of-school programs aimed at keeping students safe and supporting academic achievement. It includes funding for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers and the Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities programs.
- › **TITLE V** provides funding to promote flexibility and accountability.
 - » **Part A** provides funds for states to improve the quality, validity, and reliability of their testing systems. It also allows districts to transfer funds among certain titles to most effectively meet student needs.
 - » **Part B** provides extra grant funds and flexibility to school districts that are located in rural areas and serve fewer than 600 students.
- › **TITLE VI** covers Indian, Native Hawaiian, and Alaska Native Education.
- › **TITLE VII** provides Impact Aid to school districts with children whose families live or work on federal property, such as military bases or Native American reservations.
- › **TITLE VII** promotes informed parental choice and innovative programs by providing grants to support **Innovative Programs (Part A)** and **Public Charter Schools (Part B)**. It also includes an incentive program to help charter schools meet their facility needs.
- › **TITLE IX** prohibits sex discrimination in educational institutions that receive federal funding.
- › **TITLE X** Family Planning Program is a federal grant program for low-income patients to receive family planning and reproductive health services. It funds services including contraception, testing and treatment for sexually transmitted infections, and breast and cervical cancer screenings.

Additionally, Federal funds can be dispersed through the IDEA - Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Most recently, billions of dollars in additional Federal funds were distributed in 2020 and 2021 through ESSER - Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Funds - in response to Covid-19.

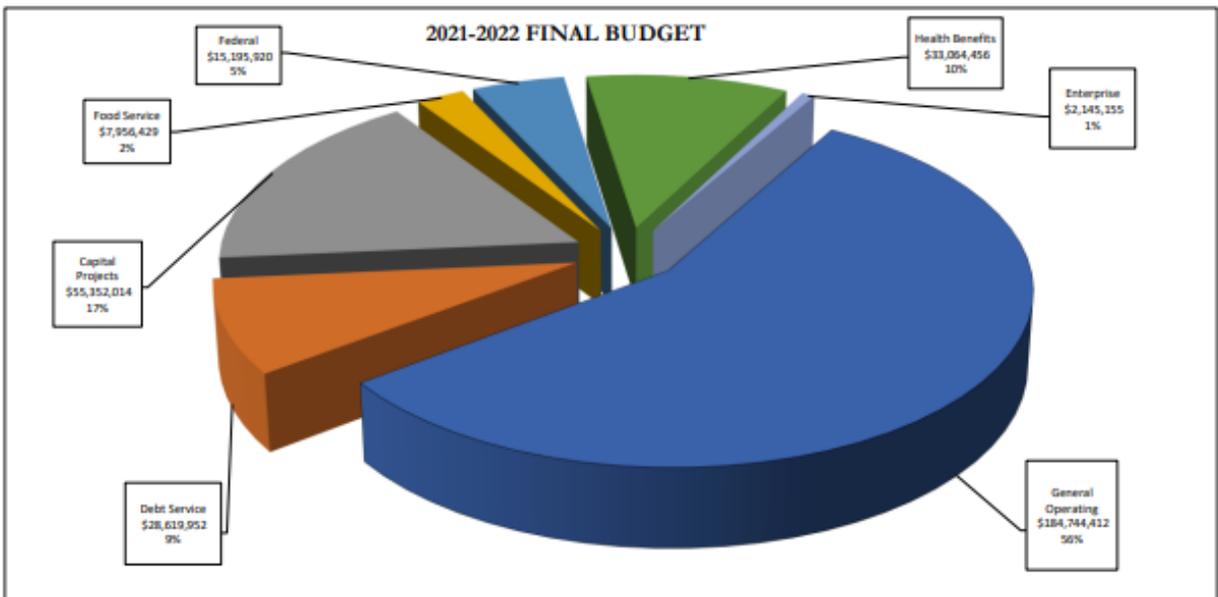
EXPENDITURES

School district expenditures range from the salaries paid to employees to utilities. Salaries will usually come from a general account, whereas utilities are paid from the capital account. Below is a list of more expenditure line-items:

1. Employee Benefits (general)
2. Health and Safety (general)

3. Curriculum (general & federal)
4. Staff Development (general)
5. Student Support Services
6. Transportation (capital)
7. Facilities (capital)
8. Utilities (capital)
9. Building Maintenance (capital)
10. Food Services (federal)

THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF INDIAN RIVER COUNTY
Final Budget
2021-2022



Comparison of 2020-2021 Final Budget to 2021-2022 Final Budget

Fund	Description	2021-22		Difference	Pct Change	Pct. Total Budget
		Tentative Budget	Final Budget			
100	General Operatin	\$ 181,834,270	\$ 184,744,412	\$ 2,910,142	2%	56%
200	Debt Service	\$ 27,200,011	\$ 28,619,952	\$ 1,419,941	5%	9%
300	Capital Projects	\$ 54,636,388	\$ 55,352,014	\$ 715,626	1%	17%
410 FS	Food Service	\$ 7,823,212	\$ 7,956,429	\$ 133,217	2%	2%
400 OTHER	Federal	\$ 17,740,538	\$ 15,195,920	\$ (2,544,618)	-14%	5%
710	Health Benefits	\$ 32,606,751	\$ 33,064,456	\$ 457,705	1%	10%
921	Enterprise	\$ 2,133,301	\$ 2,145,155	\$ 11,854	1%	1%
TOTALS		\$ 323,974,471	\$ 327,078,338	\$ 3,103,867	1%	100%

ACTION STEPS OF A WINNING SCHOOL BOARD CAMPAIGN

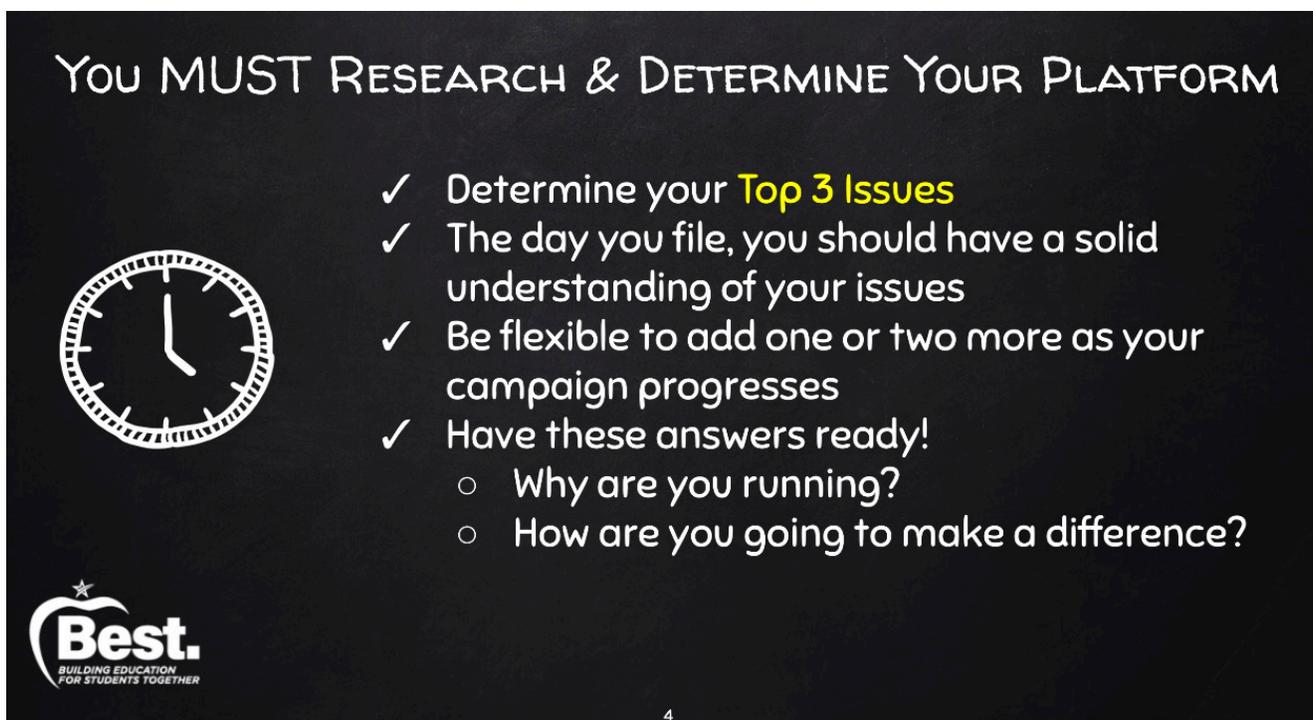
The first step is being honest with yourself. Based on the information previously covered - are you someone willing to commit to the time necessary to be an effective board member? Do you understand the roles and responsibilities of a school board member? And, are you going into the position with a full understanding and a commitment to manage the pressures that come against the school board members who are willing to stand firmly on their principles? You know your strengths and abilities. Is there a risk, that under pressure, you could be just another well-intended school board member that buckles and becomes another “go-along-to-get-along” school board member? If you are the right candidate, then let’s get you started on launching and running a winning campaign.

Running for your school board can seem - especially to first-time candidates - like a challenge. The idea of grassroots campaigning, fundraising, budgeting, ordering materials, and interacting with an often hostile press can lead many people to shy away from considering a run for school board. The purpose of these action steps is to take those challenging tasks and break them down into digestible, actionable pieces.

It has never been more important for parents and education freedom activists to stand up and run to take back our school boards. Hopefully, after completing these steps, you are in a position to challenge a bad incumbent, run for an open seat, or offer invaluable support to your favorite candidate.

ACTION STEP 1: RESEARCHING AND DETERMINING YOUR PLATFORM

It is imperative that you, as a candidate for school board, know the top 3 issues facing your community. Focusing on the broad-strokes of national education issues, like school choice legislation, Critical Race Theory, and Social and Emotional Learning is not by itself enough to sustain and propel a successful campaign for school board. In order to win, you need to be plugged into the immediate, local concerns in your town or county. You can learn about the issues facing your community by talking to local parents, attending school board meetings, or contacting local parental rights groups. Specific examples of inaction, overreach, or abuse by your incumbent school board members is always a great issue to highlight in your campaign.



YOU MUST RESEARCH & DETERMINE YOUR PLATFORM

- ✓ Determine your **Top 3 Issues**
- ✓ The day you file, you should have a solid understanding of your issues
- ✓ Be flexible to add one or two more as your campaign progresses
- ✓ Have these answers ready!
 - Why are you running?
 - How are you going to make a difference?

Best.
BUILDING EDUCATION
FOR STUDENTS TOGETHER

4

Of course, determining the top three issues in your school district is not the end of the process of determining your platform. You need to present solutions, and, specifically, solutions that you can implement upon your election to the board. This is important for you as a candidate because you need to explain to people WHY they need to vote for you, and not for your opponent. These solutions should go to the heart of what the issue you have identified is. See examples below:

- › *Your school board has limited parental involvement in meetings* → “I will push for an immediate revocation of that guidance, and in the meantime make available for all parents in this district a direct line of communication w/ me so that I can present their concerns to the board.”
- › *Your school district recently spent \$ on an outside diversity and inclusion seminar w/ CRT-inspired lesson materials* → “I will immediately begin scrutinizing outside ‘experts’ and ensure that our teachers and, by extension, the children in our school

district are not being exposed to biased curriculum at the taxpayers' expense.”

- › *Your school district is refusing to remove sexualized content from K-8 libraries* → “I will ensure that, when I am on the School Board, parental concerns will be addressed and not ignored. I will be an advocate for appropriate curriculum and reading materials for our students, which is the goal of parents in our district.”

Ideally you would have these issues, and your solutions for them, researched and decided on before you file for your school board race.

ORGANIZE A STEERING COMMITTEE

Surrounding yourself with a diverse group of campaign advisors will be instrumental to your campaign. To this end, it is beneficial for you to organize a steering committee - a group of individuals who will help guide you through the rigorous process of running for office. Select individuals for this committee that you know will be a benefit to you - former candidates, party leaders, fundraisers, and well-informed family and friends are great individuals to start with.

PREPARE A PRESS ANNOUNCEMENT

Use the media to your advantage. One of the quickest ways to capture the media's attention is to create a press release. Your announcement is a chance to show the momentum behind your campaign, so be sure to inform supporters, family, and friends ahead of time.

In order to create a press release to announce your candidacy, you will need a professional headshot, your platform issues narrowed, and individual statements of support by respectable leaders in your community.

Endorsements can be collected in advance to be used when officially announcing your candidacy for office. Having an official announcement event, coupled with announcing any endorsements you've earned prior to your official entry into the race, is a great opportunity for positive/neutral press coverage.

You need to research your local media's print and online cycle. It is not uncommon for many smaller hometown papers to print only once a week. When planning your announcement and press release, be mindful of their news cycle.

DRAFT A PRESS RELEASE

A press release should be formal and direct. It should only include just enough information to spark the reporter's interest. It is best to keep the press release to a one-page document. Incorporate quotes in the press release with any notable endorsements. Include links to your website if ready or to data that can validate your message. Most importantly, when sending a press release, the point of contact will need to be accessible for questions and on-the-record interviews with the media.

1. Use a consistent formal template
2. The font should be Verdana, AP style
3. Use direct, formal language
4. Include contact information

PRESS RELEASE

Contact: Jane Doe

561-555-5555 or Jane@JaneDoe.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, May 27th, 2022

Jane Doe Announces Launch of Candidacy for Palm Beach County School Board, District 3

West Palm Beach, FL — Jane Doe officially launched her candidacy with the supervisor of elections office today. Ms. Doe is a new face to local politics and seeking to unseat the two term incumbent in District 3 during the August 23rd election.

Jane Doe is a business owner and the mother of three children in the public school system. Ms. Doe's campaign will focus on three priorities: quality academics, financial accountability, and increased graduation rates highlighted in her announcement. "As a mom of three school-aged children, I am concerned about the quality of education my children are receiving. I am committed to ensuring every dollar goes into the classroom for needed academic support and not toward an abundance of overpaid administrators. I will work to increase curriculum transparency by creating opportunities for parents to be involved in the adoption process, and focus my efforts on improving graduation rates, especially among our minority students. In order to do so, we must adjust our district's strategic plan to ensure that every student in our district receives the skills they need to be successful and graduates with their class.

Jane Doe's campaign launch comes with the support of many well respected leaders in Palm Beach County. In an endorsement statement today, Dr. John Smith, former school board chairman, says "I am pleased to endorse Jane Doe because she will bring the common sense needed on the board to put students first."

Ms. Doe's decision to file for the District 3 seat was solidified based on the recent release of state scores published last month by the Florida Department of Education. Jane Doe says, "Based on the steady decline in scores it is obvious that the school board is in need of new leadership and I believe I have the skills set to bring about the necessary changes."

To learn more about Jane Doe visit www.JaneDoe.com

RULES FOR BUILDING YOUR MEDIA EMAIL LIST

1. Cast your net out wide by sending to both local and state media outlets.
2. Don't be afraid to send press releases to all the media outlets, BCC'd.
3. Don't overlook local radio talk show hosts and television stations along with printed media when sending out press releases.
4. Build your list by researching local news outlets. Typically you can find email addresses by scrolling down to the bottom of the home page to the "ABOUT US" section. See sample links here: <https://www.azcentral.com/contact/staff>.
5. Send to the local, education, and news desk reporters, along with editors.
6. Build relationships NOW so that the media knows who you are and so that you become the go-to thought leader reporters turn to for quotes and interviews.

REQUIRED RESEARCH

- › How are elections run in your district?
- › Where do you file your candidacy?
- › In what district do you live?
- › When does qualifying begin and end?
- › When is the date of your school board election?
- › Is the school board member in your district re-electable?

FILING TO RUN FOR SCHOOL BOARD

Depending on the size of your district, the state/county you live in, and the makeup of your district, this process will differ slightly for everyone.

Below are some key things you may need to know when filing to run in your school district.

COUNTY ELECTION OFFICIALS: In every state where school districts elect their board members, these races are considered local elections. They are managed at the county level by a County Election Official. As a prospective candidate for school board, you should familiarize yourself with the individual(s) responsible for managing your election.

PETITION/SIGNATURE REQUIREMENTS: In many states and counties, you are required to get a certain number of signatures from registered voters in your district in order to qualify for the ballot. This requirement can range from five to hundreds of signatures. Please make sure to take note of these requirements for your state/county!

FILING DEADLINES: Every election has a filing deadline. Simply put, this is the last day you can file to run for that office. All of your requirements, whether they be monetary, signatures, or paperwork, must be submitted by the filing deadline.

Now that you have completed your research, organized your campaign steering committee, and have your press release ready to go out the day you file to run for school board, the next phase of your campaign begins.

ACTION STEP 2: FUNDRAISING/BUDGETING

Fundraising and budgeting is, without a doubt, a headache and a chore for candidates and campaigns for a political race of any size. It is also, without a doubt, an essential part of any winning campaign. Candidates for local races often believe, mistakenly, that they are not required to fundraise or budget for their campaign. “My race is so small,” they say, “I will just raise what I can and spend as I have it,” they continue. If you are beginning to think this way, stop right now. Every race needs a budget. Campaigns and candidates depend on budgets because they:

Ensure your campaign manager or you, the candidate, keeps track of how much they need to raise and can spend at any given time.

Take the guesswork out of how much you need to raise in a particular period of time.

It’s helpful to stay realistic and honest about what you can and can not afford.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REPORTS

Reporting your campaign fundraising is vitally important. Failure to do so will make you a target for investigation and possible fines. You do NOT want to miss your deadlines. Candidates are required to submit regular financial reports that include contributions and expenditures; missing this deadline could cost you. You will want to know your report deadlines and be prepared with your filings in advance. Your financial reports are publicly posted. You need to have accurate, succinct, and consistent information.

SET YOUR FUNDRAISING GOALS BASED ON DEADLINES

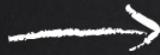
Your fundraising efforts as a candidate for office need to be intentional and consistent. You should set regular fundraising goals and try as hard as you can to meet them. Ideally, you should have weekly deadlines to hit. You need to start fundraising before you start your expenditures, and should give yourself enough time to fundraise for major expenditures. Ensuring you have the money to pay for expenditures two to three weeks in advance is a minimum requirement.

1. Determine your fundraising deadlines
 - a. By what date do you need \$\$\$ to reach deadlines?
2. Determine cost of to each phase of your campaign lan
 - a. How much do you need?
 - b. Direct mail, text, social media, etc.

SAMPLE CAMPAIGN EXPENSES IN PHASES

1st Phase

- Signs
- Banners
- Business cards
- T-shirts
- Palm Cards



2nd Phase

- Booths at community events
- Parades
- Signs
- Social Media
- Monthly publications
- Door Hangers



3rd Phase

- Targeted Voters List
- Postcards
 - Absentee Voters
 - Early Voters
 - Day of Voters
- Enveloped Letters
- Stamps
- Printed Media
- Text Messaging
- Radio commercials

30 (2) and 60 seconds



BUILDING YOUR BUDGET

When you are imagining your budget, you need to be conservative in your estimations. The most important thing you can ask yourself is: What is the bare minimum I need to win this election? You will determine the answer to that question not by guessing, but through research. See how much successful candidates spent in years past to win similar races.

Get quotes from graphic designers, website builders, printers, and other vendors you will use over the course of your campaign.

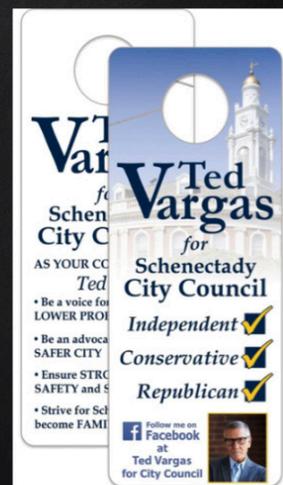
PLAN NOW

PRINTED MATERIALS

Are they designed?
What is the cost?

Turn around time
How long does it take print?
Estimated time for shipping?

What are your goals
of doors ?
of early voter mailers?
day of voter mailers?



Your budget needs to account for campaign materials, postage, purchasing voter lists, events, and incidental expenses. It is best to formulate your budget once you have a grasp on how much each of these individual buckets of spending will cost.

SAMPLE \$10,000 CAMPAIGN BUDGET

	Summary	June	July	August	Sept	October	November	TOTAL
Summary	Voter Outreach	0	0	0	1000	1500	1500	4000
	Collateral	300	400	500	500	0	0	1700
	Field	0	0	500	750	750	750	2750
	Admin	200	100	500	250	750	750	2550
	Total:	500	500	1500	2500	2500	2500	10000
Voter Outreach	Mailers	0	0	0	1000	1000	1500	3500
	Digital	0	0	0	0	500	0	500
	Sub-Total	0	0	0	1000	1500	1500	4000
Collateral	Signs	0	200	100	0	0	0	300
	Literature	0	200	300	500	0	0	1000
	Misc. (Stickers, etc)	300	0	100	0	0	0	400
	Sub-Total	300	400	500	500	0	0	1700
Field	Campaign Events	0	0	500	500	250	250	1500
	Field Expenses	0	0	0	250	500	500	1250
	Sub-Total	0	0	500	750	750	750	2750
Admin	Fundraising	100	0	300	50	500	0	950
	Misc.	100	100	200	200	250	750	1600
	Sub-Total	200	100	500	250	750	750	2550

SAMPLE \$20,000 CAMPAIGN BUDGET

	Summary	June	July	August	Sept	October	November	TOTAL
Summary	Voter Outreach	0	0	1300	1000	4000	4000	10300
	Collateral	400	400	600	350	0	0	1750
	Field	0	0	500	750	1000	1000	3250
	Admin	500	500	700	1000	1000	1000	4700
	Total:	900	900	3100	3100	6000	6000	20000
Voter Outreach	Mailers	0	0	1000	1000	2500	2500	7000
	Digital	0	0	300	0	1500	1500	3300
	Sub-Total	0	0	1300	1000	4000	4000	10300
Collateral	Signs	200	200	100	0	0	0	500
	Literature	0	200	500	300	0	0	1000
	Misc. (Stickers, etc)	200	0	0	50	0	0	250
	Sub-Total	400	400	600	350	0	0	1750
Field	Campaign Events	0	0	400	250	250	250	1150
	Field Expenses	0	0	100	500	750	750	2100
	Sub-Total	0	0	500	750	1000	1000	3250
Admin	Fundraising	300	300	400	600	600	200	2400
	Misc.	200	200	300	400	400	800	2300
	Sub-Total	500	500	700	1000	1000	1000	4700

SET THE BUDGET — AND STICK TO IT!

Your budget should be comprehensive and exhaustive. Therefore, there is rarely, if ever, a good reason to deviate from a good budget. When budgeting, you need to account for all anticipated expenditures, as mentioned before. Once you've built a good budget, it is imperative that you stick to it. If something is not in the budget, do not spend money on it. Often, when first-time candidates have a good fundraising month, the urge to spend beyond the budget is strong. If necessary, you can amend your budget with careful precision as necessary, but never start spending "just because I have the money."

BUILDING A POTENTIAL DONOR LIST

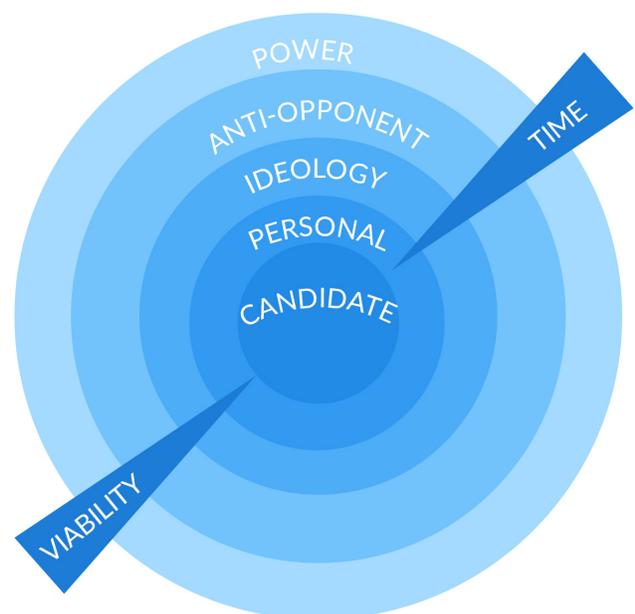
Building a donor list might seem like a daunting task, but it is a critical first step that **MUST NOT** be avoided or expected to happen on its own. Asking for a campaign contribution is one of the most difficult things a candidate will ever have to do. However, money matters and you will need it to win, especially if a candidate faces an incumbent. Running a campaign will require you as a candidate to be organized and methodical in seeking campaign contributions. Time management is going to be key to your success in fundraising. You will need to set a schedule that forces you to set the necessary time aside each day to make phone calls and set meetings with potential donors. Do not wait until the week your campaign financial report is due to start making phone calls and asking for campaign contributions.

CREATE A WEEKLY FUNDRAISING CALENDAR

1. Set weekly fundraising goals for yourself!
2. Plan fundraising activities (ex. Meet & Greets)
3. Schedule a weekly email
4. **Set a minimum goal of 5 days a week to make 3 personal fundraising asks a day.**

WHERE TO START

Start with your friends and family, steering committee, host committee, and build out from there, as you will see in the concentric circles illustrating the different groups of people who should be asked to contribute to your campaign. The further away someone is from the candidate, the later in the race they will typically donate, and the more competitive the candidate will need to be for them to engage.



Source: NGP VAN, Gabby Weiss

The candidate's **personal network** is composed of family, friends, and close professional contacts of the candidate. They give out of loyalty to the candidate, with less regard for ideological stance or viability. This is the group that should be reached out to first, to fund early campaign expenses.

Ideological donors give because they are advocates for causes that the candidate supports. Ideological donors often give early in the campaign, to ensure that their candidate has a strong standing in the race.

Anti-opponent donors give because they have a stake in defeating the other candidate. Their interests will be harmed by your opponent's victory, and they have a strong incentive to invest in your campaign in order to harm your opponent's chances.

Finally, donors in the **power donor** circle give to protect and advance their own professional and economic interests. They are interested in maintaining a positive relationship with elected officials and give later in the race, often to both sides. Power circle donors often support incumbents, and will support open seat candidates who are seen as viable, but give to challengers only when their competitiveness in the race has been firmly established.

Examples of power circle donors include business groups and professional associations, Political Action Committees (PACs), Teachers Unions, and district vendors.

ASKING FOR DONATIONS

ASKING FOR DONATIONS

YOU CAN'T BE AFRAID TO ASK FOR MONEY CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS!

5 Ways to Ask for Campaign Contributions

1. In Person
2. By Mail
3. On the Phone
4. Text with contribution link
5. By Email
6. Through Another Donor



IN PERSON

The best way to ever ask a potential donor for money is in person. This is the most professional way to do it. It demonstrates that you respect the people from whom you are asking for money and view them as something more than just a checkbook. Anytime you don't personally know the people you are requesting a contribution from, you should do everything you can to meet them in person. An in-person meeting can take place at their

office, at a coffee shop, or even over lunch.

Going to the potential donor is quicker and it makes it easier to set up a meeting with the hard to connect with donors. Meet at their place of business, or schedule a 30-minute meet-up for coffee. Both you and your potential donor are busy, so those settings typically keep the meetings from going too long. Lunches often go an hour or more, hence burning more precious campaign time.

THINGS TO REMEMBER

1. Make sure to follow up again, by phone or in person, before your fundraising event.
2. A potential donor is more likely to contribute and continue to give you money, once you are elected, if they see you as a “real person” who wants to serve, and not just another politician, looking to climb the political ladder.
3. Make sure to call your fundraising list of potential donors or repeat donors, 2-3 weeks before your event.
4. Set aside 2-3 hours on 2-3 days, until you call every name on your list.
5. Get a big cup of coffee or water, strap yourself in, put your head down and start dialing.
6. This allows you to “work” your list in “bite size” sections. This will help you to not feel overwhelmed by the task.
7. The best time to make fundraising calls is between 2-4 in the afternoon, on Tuesdays and Wednesdays.
8. Monday is not a good day for most business people. They are dealing with issues/problems that may have occurred over the weekend.
9. Thursday is a “getaway day.” A lot of business owners take Friday off.
10. Fundraising is not hard if you work to build relationships with your supportive donors.
11. Make sure to always send a handwritten thank you note after you receive a donation or after a fundraising event.

Source: <https://thecampaignschool.com/fundraising-advice-winning-candidate-chris-macarthur/>

IN THE MAIL

Direct mail is not only a great way to connect with voters while you’re campaigning, but it’s also a great way to communicate with potential campaign donors. You can send out fundraising invitations to events your campaign is hosting. Invitations to fundraising events are a great way to raise your name identification among potential donors. You also demonstrate your value as a candidate by listing prominent endorsements and financial supporters on an invitation.

FUNDRAISING TEAM/HOST COMMITTEE

- ✓ Plan out Meet & Greet fundraising events to give your campaign a financial boost.
- ✓ Host committees can start your fundraising efforts & give you instant credibility as a candidate.
- ✓ Relationships matter– don't be afraid to ask.
- ✓ Large gifts should be significant source, but smaller gifts are critical!



RE-ELECT
Carole Jean JORDAN
Tax Collector
Pres. Leadership. Best Policy. Total Responsibility.
DRS. DEEPTI AND HARISH SADHWANI

Samantha & The Hon. Robbie Brackett
The Hon. Janice Broda & Bob Bruce
Judy & Joe Coakley
Elaine & Dr. Nicholas Coppola
Carol & Tom Carr
Betty & Dr. Henry Fischer
Rosemary Fischer
Rachel & Major Eric Flowers
Susan Franke
Kevin Given
The Hon. Erin Grill & Michael Biatecki
Dan Haender
Drs. Divya & Anand Haryani
Tina & Greg Hertzik
Carol Johnson
Heather & Billy Jordan
Michael & Dr. Pramod Joseph
The Hon. Lilyan & Mark Justice
The Hon. Diamond Lutz
Sheiff Deryl Lutz
Marina & Tom Lockwood

Beverly & The Hon. Tommy Lowther
Alma Lee Loy
Michele & Paul Lucas
Shelley & Jeff Lusher
The Hon. Debbie Mayfield & Bob Scaringe
Mary Beth & Dr. John McDonald
Gina Meadows
Paul Mitchell
Harry Ottatt
Karen & Bill Penney
Linda & Don Proctor
Ali & Tahir Quilbush
Jim Rathbun
Pam & Bob Richardson
Chris Setton
Wanda & The Hon. Jeff Smith
Dr. Tiffany Spillone & Greg McLean
Linda & Robert Stone
Carmen & Bob Stone
Hillic & Mark Tipton
Kosta Velis
The Hons. Laura & Tim Zorc

Cordially Invite You to a Fundraising Reception in Support of the
CAROLE JEAN JORDAN RE-ELECTION CAMPAIGN
Tuesday, November 19th
from
5:30pm - 7:30pm
at
Quail Valley at the Pointe
One Royal Palm Pointe - Vero Beach

Please make checks payable to: Carole Jean Jordan Campaign.
For more information call or email Pam Richardson at paminvero@bellsouth.net or (772)713-6752
Political advertisement paid for and approved by Carole Jean Jordan, Republican,
for Indian River County Tax Collector.

You can also mail letters specifically asking for contributions. Such letters need to make a very clear case for why you're running and what you're going to do. If answers to those questions aren't in your letter, you haven't made a compelling case for anyone to donate to your campaign. If you do send out a fundraising letter, be sure to include a remit envelope so people who wish to support you can easily mail a check to your campaign.

ON THE PHONE

Asking for money works best when you already know the donor. After you have met someone and have developed a rapport with them, you can ask for a contribution over the phone. If you do not know the person and are making a cold call to them, it's best to use the call to introduce yourself and request an in-person meeting.

Phone calls are also a key component to raising money for a fundraising event. You can call donors you know and ask them to serve as hosts or sponsors of your event. This comes with a clear financial commitment that gets them listed on the event's invitation.

Making calls after invitations are sent out is also something you must do. A few days after the invitations are mailed out, you need to call the people you sent them to.

Invitations raise awareness of your campaign and your event, it does not guarantee a donation or successful event. Following up with a phone call to invite the potential donor and secure a commitment is essential to ensure your event is a success rather than a dud.

THROUGH ANOTHER DONOR

The best person to contact a donor for a political contribution for a campaign actually isn't the candidate, it's another donor. Having a major donor serving as your campaign's Finance Chair is a great idea for any campaign. Your Finance Chair usually knows other donors and can ask them directly for contributions to your campaign.

A donor acting as your Finance Chair can set up in-person meetings with potential donors

ACTION STEP 3: MARKETING YOURSELF AS A CANDIDATE

There is an old adage that instructs: always put your best foot forward. Marketing for a candidate is the embodiment of this principle. You want your marketing materials to be clean, easy to read, clear, and informative. Your first priority is to make sure the public knows your name, associates you with the school board seat you are running for, and can relate your name to a positive image. With that understanding, the following sections will help ground you in marketing yourself as a candidate.

WHAT CONSTITUTES MARKETING?

A better way to ask this question may be: What doesn't constitute marketing? Everything you put out in the public over the course of your campaign is part of your marketing. This includes:

1. Your prepared speeches
2. Your materials: pamphlets/palm cards, yard signs, and campaign "swag"
3. Your website

Effectively, anything that makes up your "brand" as a candidate is marketing. With all of these products and materials, you want to make sure you stay consistent with your message and your values. Consistency helps cement your brand and reputation as a candidate. This established brand and reputation then allows you to control the narrative of your campaign, and makes it that much harder for your opponents and the media to define you in less favorable terms.

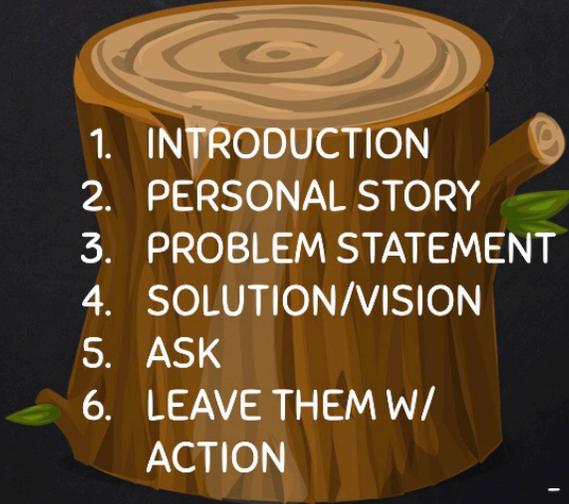
MASTERING YOUR CAMPAIGN SPEECH(ES)

Campaigning will, as a natural consequence, force you to become comfortable with public speaking. You will be presented with innumerable opportunities to present your vision to the voters in your community. Stump speeches are the bedrock of any campaign appearance you make. Your stump speech needs to concisely identify for your audience the purpose behind your campaign. Your stump speech needs to answer the questions:

1. Who are you?
2. What makes you qualified?
3. Why are you running for office?
4. What are your platform issues (problems)?
5. How do you plan on making a difference (solutions)?
6. Why should they vote for you?

PRACTICE. PRACTICE. PRACTICE!

STUMP SPEECH STRUCTURE

- 
1. INTRODUCTION
 2. PERSONAL STORY
 3. PROBLEM STATEMENT
 4. SOLUTION/VISION
 5. ASK
 6. LEAVE THEM W/
ACTION



- thecampaignworkshop.com

Your stump speech is also, realistically, not just one speech. You should be prepared to give a version of your speech in timeframes of 90 seconds, 2 minutes, 3 minutes, 5 minutes, and 10 minutes. The shorter versions are best for forum preparations, talking to voters at impromptu meet-ups, and the press. You need to prepare the longer versions for your scheduled stops, speaking engagements, and events that you host.

ALWAYS ASK FOR THEIR VOTE: This is the most important piece of advice we can give you. At the end of any pitch, speech, or discussion you have with a voter, you must ask for their vote. For many, this can seem uncomfortable the first time, but it is absolutely imperative that you do. If you don't ask for their vote, and they don't confirm that they will vote for you in the primary or general election, you have NOT earned their support. It may seem odd, or even conceited, to ask someone to vote for you. In reality, however, asking for someone's vote proves you have the guts to do the job you are running to do.

BECOMING A MARKETING MASTER

Now that you have worked out your speech, you need to build out your brand for your campaign materials. These materials include your yard signs, t-shirts, palm cards, pamphlets, and any digital logos you use. The most important thing to remember across all of these materials is consistency: consistent logos, images, and consistent name use.

Your logo should be used in all campaign materials where it will fit, including:

1. Yard signs or hand-held signs
2. Websites/social media
3. T-Shirts
4. Marketing materials (pamphlets, door hangers, palm cards)
5. Business cards, name tags, postcards

CREATING A LOGO

The first, and most important, step in branding is your logo. You want a logo that makes a statement, clearly identifies your name, and relates to the office you are running for. It needs to catch the attention of prospective voters, so using bold, contrasting colors is important. These colors would also, ideally along with the graphics, match the office you are running for.

CREATING A LOGO

Your Logo is Your Marketing Brand!

- ✗ Does your Logo make a statement?
- ✗ Is it rememberable?
- ✗ Does the color theme and graphics match the office?
- ✗ Stay consistent with your branding through use of your logo
 - For example
 - Signs
 - Websites/ Social Media
 - T-Shirts
 - Volunteers for parades, sign waving, door to door, community events
 - Marketing Material
 - Palm cards, business cards, postcards, name tags



PALM CARD DESIGN

Your palm card or, if you choose to design it as such, your door hanger, is an integral part of the grassroots dimension to your campaign. This two-sided piece of literature is meant to introduce you, the main points of your campaign, and the fact that there is an election going on to prospective voters. It should be straightforward, easy to read, and highlight the most important information for your campaign: your name, and the date of the election. To be complete, a palm card should contain:

1. Your logo
2. Your headshot
3. Bullet points describing:
 - a. Who you are
 - b. Your key issues
 - c. An “ask” for their vote
 - d. Contact information
 - e. Date of the election

You will need to produce enough of these palm cards to leave at every door you plan to knock on during your campaign and to have at any campaign rally or event you host.

SOCIAL MEDIA

If anything is clear about the 21st century, it is that we live in a digital age. As a school board candidate, having an online presence is integral to giving legitimacy to your campaign, giving you a platform to share events, and helping streamline your small dollar donation operation. Online presence primarily comes in two forms: social media and campaign websites. These avenues of communication come with risks and benefits.

SOCIAL MEDIA

STEPS:

1. CREATE CONTENT
2. SCHEDULE YOUR CONTENT TO AUTOMATICALLY POST

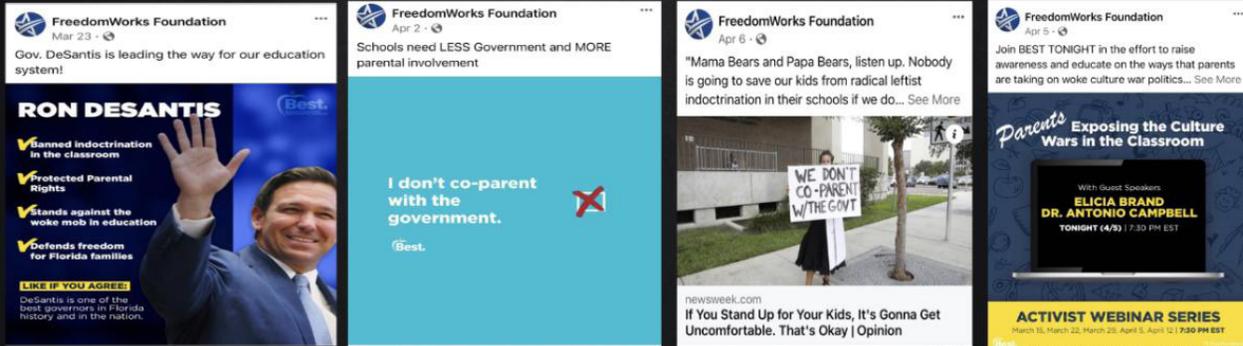


15 Presentation template by SlidesCarnival. Photographs by Unsplash

SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT

Do's – Candidate, Issues, Letters to the Editor, Op-Ed, Events, Volunteer Opportunities

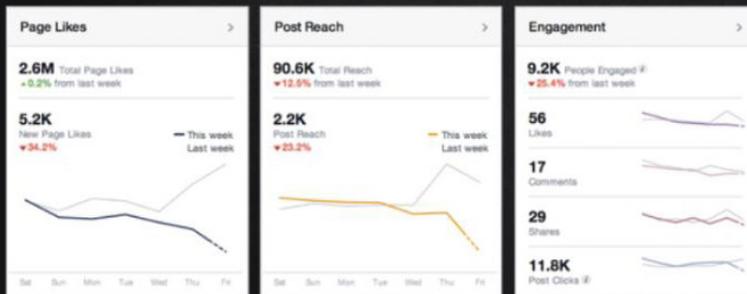
Don't – Write a Thesis, Share Post, or Engage in a Debate



Presentation template by SlidesCarnival. Photographs by Unsplash

ADVANTAGES FOR CAMPAIGNS

- ✓ Set up a calendar for posts
- ✓ Engage with your audience
- ✓ Go Live on Social Media
- ✓ Run social media ads
- ✓ Measure your success with Page Insights



SOCIAL MEDIA: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Truth Social. All of these platforms hinge on the same core idea: give individuals an online platform on which to promote and discuss ideas, events, pictures, memes, and news. Facebook is the king of social media, with the largest number of daily users (in the US and internationally). Your campaign would be greatly served by a social media presence through one or all of these platforms.

THE RISKS:

- › Starting unnecessary arguments
 - › **Don't do it!** Don't respond to trolls and liberals who comment on your posts. Let your supporters take care of that or, better yet, ignore them.
- › Wasting time
 - › Yes, social media is important, but it is not the most important thing when running a campaign! Don't spend hours scrolling or chatting on social media when there is so much more to be done to boost your campaign.

THE BENEFITS:

- › Outreach to new supporters
- › Name recognition
- › Establishing credibility on issues

YOUR WEBSITE

More important than social media, your website is the hub for all of your events, statements, policy proposals, and a place to get donations. Even more than that, though, your website is your most powerful internet tool. It is the place where you, and only you, decide what your platform is, what you want the voters to know about you, and directly share your calendar of upcoming events. A well-built website will also allow you to directly take and process donations on the site.

VOTERS ARE ONLINE! ARE YOU?

33% of voters report they use search engines to find information.
80% of voters report they go online to research elections.

Leverage your online presence!

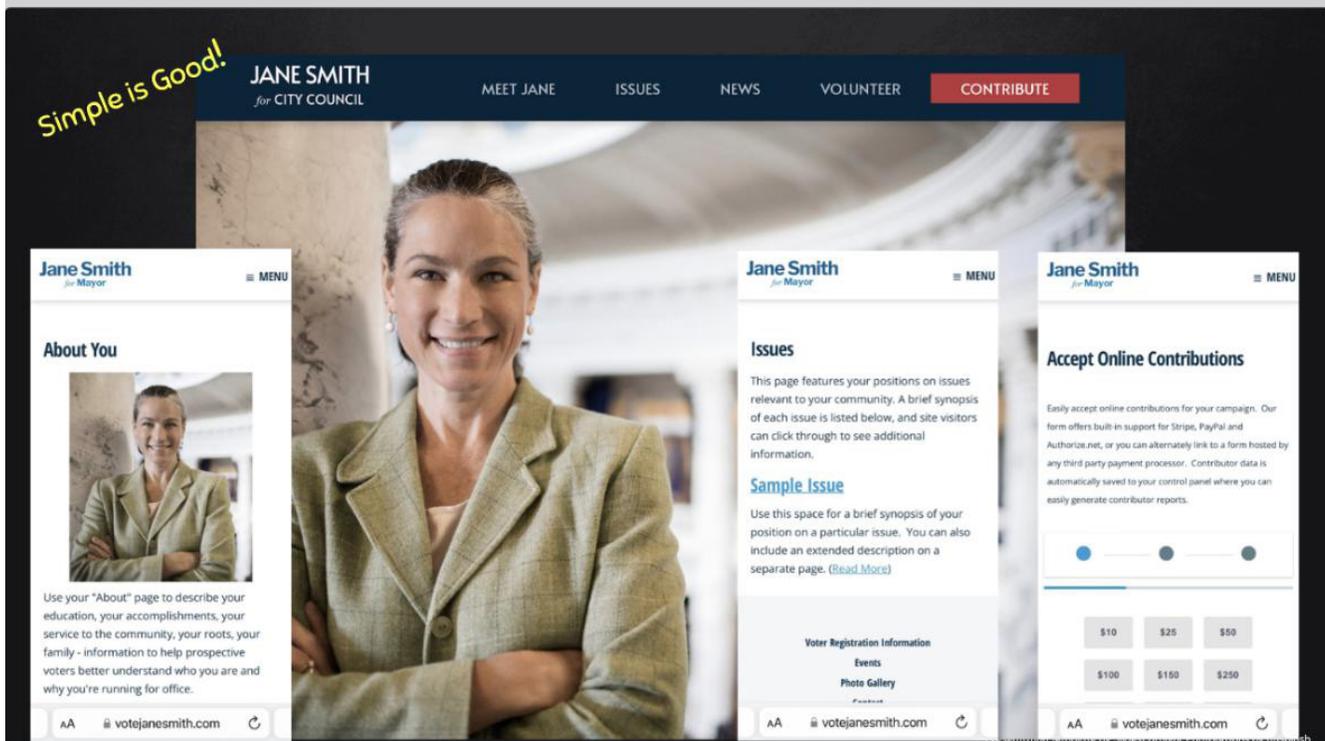
Do you have a website?

- Maximize Your Search Engine Optimization (SEO)
 - ✓ Content needs to be rich with key words
 - ✓ Your name, name of the position, etc..



Source: SpeakEasyPolitical.com

Presentation template by SlidesCarnival. Photographs by Unsplash



Simple is best! Don't overcomplicate your website. With out-of-the-box campaign website builders like Campaign Partner (illustrated on second image above), you do not need to spend a million dollars to create a high-impact site. There are many easy ways to create and maintain website templates online for as low as \$29 a month.

ACTION STEP 4: MAKING AN IMPACT WITH EARNED MEDIA

Earned media is any media or press coverage generated without you purchasing it. In other words, earned media is free exposure for you and your campaign. It's an excellent way to build name recognition and reach potential voters who fall outside of your typical network. Earned media is publicity or exposure gained from methods other than paid advertising.

HOW TO EARN MEDIA?

BE INVOLVED

To earn media, you need to be involved and where the action is. As a school board candidate, you must understand the issues in the community and know when and how to capitalize on them.

- › What are parents currently dealing with in your local community?
- › What are the latest hot topics in your school district?

You need to know the answers to these questions and be prepared to speak on them at any time. Consider showing up where no one else is. For example, is there a committee meeting outside of your regular school board meetings that you can attend to educate yourself on what's going on behind the scenes?

BE THE EXPERT

You want to be seen as a thought leader in your community. As a school board candidate or someone considering running one day, you need to build strong name recognition. Look for ways a candidate may weigh in on a topic of discussion so that you can get your name out there as a thought leader in the community.

Get on the radar of friendly media personalities and influencers by engaging with them on social media. Don't go straight to the big-name national news channels and media outlets and instead focus on building relationships with hyper-local media personalities. Start by building rapport with local radio stations, news broadcasters, print reporters, podcasters, and bloggers. Then, think about who you can get to talk about you or interview you on their podcast, social media, or blog.

Practical ways you can get media attention are drafting a press release for your campaign or group, writing a press statement, or starting a letter to the editor campaign.

DRAFTING A PRESS STATEMENT: There is a subtle difference between a press release and a statement of response, although these terms are used interchangeably. A press release (reviewed in Phase One) is generally used for new information such as an announcement or update. A statement in response is utilized in cases that require a reaction.

When sending a press release or statement in response, remember that everything is on record as soon as you press send. Be ready and prepared to respond to media inquiries. Here are a few simple points to remember when working with the media.

BE PREPARED TO PUSH SEND:

1. Always have someone proofread for clarity and accuracy.

2. Double check the address, dates, and times of location.
3. Always BCC reporters.
4. Monitor for responses.
5. Keep track of press interactions.
6. Know that it is okay only to answer questions you feel comfortable answering. It's ok to say, "I want to give an accurate response; I will need to get back to you on that."

HOW TO START A "LETTERS TO THE EDITOR" CAMPAIGN

Plan the Roll out of your Letters to the Editor Campaign

1. Minimum 2 letters per week
2. Start 5 weeks from election date
3. Space submissions
4. Mondays and Wednesdays are best if possible
5. Start ASAP because this takes time to plan

A Letters to the Editor Campaign can be a powerful tool. With school boards imposing time limits and other tough restrictions on community members and parents at school board meetings, we must utilize other resources available to us to make our voices heard. Sending letters to the editor is an important advocacy and campaign strategy because it is a free way to reach a large audience, bring attention to issues or information not addressed in news articles, and capture the attention of elected officials.

Fortunately, writing a letter to the editor is easier than you think.

TIPS ON WRITING A LETTER TO THE EDITOR:

1. Keep it short and address only one subject. Generally, 250 words or less is most effective.
2. Know the maximum word count allowed and do not exceed it. Many newspapers have strict limits on the length of letters and have limited space to publish them.
3. Carefully highlight the key takeaways the reader should remember.

HOW TO SUBMIT A LETTER TO THE EDITOR:

1. To submit a letter, address it directly via email to the letter's editor. Start your email with a note that summarizes your letter, followed by the letter itself in the body of the email. Do not submit your letter as an attachment.
2. Alternatively, some publications require submission through an online form. These forms might ask for your full name, city, daytime telephone number, and email address in addition to the text of the letter itself.

ACTION STEP 5: GRASSROOTS CAMPAIGNING

TARGETING VOTERS

One of the most important aspects of running a campaign is understanding your district. Once you understand your district's concerns, it is important that you understand how to target your efforts. As we'll see throughout this section there are a variety of tools available to you. However, they're not very helpful when you don't know where to direct them.

With each of your efforts, you will want to find the top voters. These voters are people who vote regularly. Because school board elections (even in 2022) are not always aligned with general elections and often are ignored by many members of the public, you need to find out who will actually vote in these races. If you want to bring in new voters who may be concerned about education efforts for the first time, you can do that in parallel with turning out top voters. If you're considering a large voter registration effort, that is generally done long before a campaign starts by the party in your state. If you're a handful of months out from election day, you don't have time for much of your efforts to be voter registration.

To identify these voters, you'll need to gain access to the voter registration list or your state/local party's list of registered voters. These lists are made available to campaigns for the purposes of contacting voters about elections. This list can usually be found at your county clerk and recorder (sometimes called county supervisor) or at the state elections office. The lists usually come at a cost but generally not very expensive. This method is affordable but only gives you access to raw data that you have to organize. It is generally preferable to use the parties data and voter list if that is accessible to you. Many state parties are engaging in school board races and will make that information available. This helps you avoid building spreadsheets and sorting data during your valuable campaign time. Often, the state or county party will also lend you voter contact tools that allow you to submit feedback and interactions through an app on your phone that tracks and reports data.

Some programs that you're likely to come across for voter contact may include I360, Advantage, or Campaign Sidekick. If you're running a large campaign and the party does not provide these applications and voter information you should consider paying for their services for the campaign.

Once you've identified voters who vote regularly, you need to begin finding voters who agree with your message. It's not worth your time to talk to voters that are opposed to your message, especially in races that have limited resources. If a race has become politicized, you may need to reach out to only those in your party and unaffiliated voters. It's also likely that your state party is beginning to support candidates and will let you have access to some of the information it has on top voters who tend to vote for similar candidates. It's vital that you not spend valuable campaign time trying to persuade voters who don't want to be persuaded while your competition is convincing a much larger number of persuadable voters.

MAKING CONTACT WITH VOTERS

Once you've created a list of the voters you need to talk to, the next step is to get out and talk to them. This section will review different ways that you can make contact with voters and some strategies that should be employed.

WHEN AND HOW TO CONTACT VOTERS

You should be contacting voters throughout the campaign. Ideally, you would contact all top voters several times. This is often not possible for small campaigns, but do not worry about contacting the same voter again so long as you leave them some time (about a week) between contacts. For each voter who becomes upset about being contacted more than once, many more voters are more likely to vote because of the second contact.

It is important that voters are contacted about your from different places as well. For a small campaign it would be ideal for them to hear about you from 2-3 different places. This could include seeing a mailer, knocking on their door, seeing you at an event, receiving a text message, a friend bringing you up, hearing about you at church, getting a phone call, et cetera. It's important that you have multiple different contact points.

DOOR KNOCKING

Door knocking is one of the more powerful ways that you can connect with voters and secure their votes. While time consuming, this face-to-face interaction is the best option to persuade undecided voters. If you have a large volunteer base, it can be done for a relatively cheap cost. If you're running a larger campaign, you could consider paying professional door knockers. It's very important, specifically with door knocking, that you're tracking all of the data from the conversation at the door. It's also important that you're using the targeting mentioned in the prior section to knock specific doors. You cannot and should not knock every door on a block!

Once you reach the door you should have the following objectives in your mind:

GAIN THEIR SUPPORT: At the end of the day, you need to confidently ask voters for their support. If you're unwilling to ask for their support, they're less likely to offer it. As a candidate, you're now a salesperson, and it's your job to sell a vision of the future that you can help make a reality.

For those voters that are very supportive give them something that they can do. Ask them to help "impact the district" by knocking on doors, making phone calls, making a donation, or a variety of other options. Especially in small towns where people are more connected, these "asks" are easier to make and more likely to be fulfilled. Make it clear where they can donate and put that idea clearly in their head. If you've put in the work to be someone worth supporting, you should see returns on that investment.

IDENTIFY TOP CONCERNS: You need to identify their top concerns; this will not only help you understand the needs of the community but also allow you to make sure you're tailoring your pitch to each individual. If they tell you what they want, give it to them! Whether on an individual basis or across the whole campaign, if you're not focused on the community's top concerns you're going to lose support. Be careful not to conflate YOUR top concerns with THEIR top concerns. Just because you care about something doesn't mean they do. You need to talk about what matters to them.

Once you've begun a conversation at the door make sure you follow these few key steps:

- 1. Listen** — They need to trust and like you. People don't vote for people they dislike. Additionally, if you don't listen you'll never be able to identify their top concern or execute the next step.
- 2. Empathize** — Let them know they've been heard and you're not just a politician.

Without making the whole conversation about your past, try to share a relatable detail based on their stories/concerns.

- 3. Offer solutions when possible** — After you have listened and empathized with their concerns, offer a solution. Again, you're selling yourself and a vision of the future with you as an elected official. You need to let them know how you would address their concerns in a sincere manner. They need to be able to clearly understand the difference between you and the status quo. If there is no common ground on their concern and therefore you cannot offer a solution, pivot to another issue instead of engaging in a debate.

CALLS

Phone calls are another effective way to reach a large number of individuals. This is a very accessible activity for volunteers because it can even be done from their homes. When it comes to choosing technology for phone calls, you should follow the same recommendations for door knocking mentioned above. If the party is willing to lend you expensive resources, you should probably use them. One mistake you do not want to make is to use your personal number. It's best to use a general campaign number (you could use a google phone number) when calling. You also should also put a second or general phone number on business cards as well.

One important note when it comes to phone calls is that all the processes used for engaging someone at the door should be used for engaging someone on the phone. However, since people are likely to hang up or be short-winded on the phone, the process can be expedited.

TEXT

Text messaging is another reliable way to connect with voters. People reliably check their text messages, especially when compared to the likelihood that they will answer their door or phone. Texting should certainly be part of the way you connect with voters. Like phone calling, it is a very easy way to get in contact with voters. Unlike phone calls and door knocking, it's quite one-sided. Therefore, it's important to include action items in texts and often correlate them to some sort of event. This could be a breaking news story, the beginning of early voting, election day, or other related dates. Some programs texting platforms you come across may include: RumbleUp, SA group text, and the platforms mentioned for door knocking can often be used for texts as well.

It's also worth noting that there are typically two types of messages you can send. You can send a mass text through a platform that does not allow responses, or you can have volunteers send messages that are designed to generate a response.

Ensure that you review rules around texting including opt-out language and payment disclosures as needed.

EVENTS

You need to be where the voters are. Holding and attending events is an important part of showing the community that you value their input. When deciding what events to attend, you should ask yourself where the voters who will vote for you are going to be and go there. That could mean rallies, conservative club meetings, meet and greets, or more. If you're running for school board, you certainly need to be attending school board meetings, you also need to attend large community events such as fairs, parades, etc.

BLOCKING AND BRIDGING

BE READY FOR THE MUDSLINGING

Attacks against you are inevitable in a winning campaign. Once your opponent(s) and their supporters recognize that you are a legitimate candidate, the negative attacks and mudslinging is going to come. Mentally prepare yourself, because local races are sometimes the worst when it comes to the negativity. Remember that you are running in a school board race. You need to go ahead and think through the individuals and groups in your district who have control of the school district's purse strings and the school board's decision-making process. Oftentimes, the threatened opposition will come from local political parties, current or past school board members, teacher union/association leaders, in addition to your opponent(s).

As someone who is running for all the right reasons, you will consider the lies and attacks to be the worst part of running for office. It is difficult to plan for the mudslinging because the lies or innuendos will often be downright malicious with little to no fact to the attack.

Your reaction to the negativity will make or break your momentum with voters. In local school board elections, avoid at all costs engaging or overreacting to the negative campaigning. There might be times that you will need to respond to set the record straight. If this is the case - set the record straight and move on!

WHAT NOT TO DO:

1. Do not go on the defense even if it is or isn't true.
2. Do not dwell in the negative campaign by talking about it publicly or with supporters.
3. Never repeat the negative information in a public setting such as at a forum or with the media. You will need to be prepared to address the accusations without repeating it.

WHAT TO DO:

Use this as an opportunity to show that you are the best candidate. This is called "blocking and bridging."

The classic block-and-bridge technique can steer the conversation toward more favorable, and often mutually beneficial, topics. Prepared candidates can use this technique to regain control over the topic. Blocking and bridging is certainly helpful when a forum or media interview is getting confrontational.

BLOCK FIRST

Blocking doesn't mean completely ignoring the allegation or attack and jumping into defensive mode because it will make you look suspicious. Always remember the old adage, "If you are explaining—you're losing."

A successful block starts with acknowledging the question. A brief acknowledgment of the question lets the audience know you heard and understand what they're asking. Remember do not repeat the negative claim. Acknowledging the question and repeating the question have two different meanings. Follow acknowledgement of the question by an appropriate transition. There are numerous statements a candidate can use to smoothly redirect the

conversation. Through this technique, a candidate is able to maintain a positive rapport while regaining control over the conversation.

A few tried-and-true blocking options include:

1. “Thank you for bringing that up, however, it’s also important to emphasize...”
2. “That is an important point and it also speaks to a bigger issue which is...”
3. “Unfortunately, that is a misinformation campaign started by my opponent (and/or opponents supporters) that is fabricated, but I can tell you I am the best person for the job because XYZ...”

THEN, BUILD A BRIDGE

Follow a successful block with a bridge: introduce a topic that more closely aligns with the message your campaign is trying to send. Instead of stumbling through an excuse in response to the allegation, treat this as an opportunity to showcase some of the positive aspects of what you have accomplished or are aiming to accomplish as a new school board member.

Try to predict and be prepared for hard questions ahead of every forum or media interview. It is helpful to sit down with your campaign steering committee to review the key message of your campaign. This exercise will help you stay focused and avoid distractions.

BE THE SOLUTION

One last piece of advice: When speaking to voters, your goal as a candidate should be to strive to be remembered as the solution to the problems the district faces. As a candidate, don’t fall into the trap of dwelling on the issues in your conversation—whether that be at someone’s doorstep or addressing an audience at a public forum. Be prepared to spend most of your time selling your plan/solutions to the problems identified. Lastly, an easy way to stay on track is to think of it as talking about the issues in bullet points and your solutions in paragraphs.

BE READY FOR THE ATTACKS

- ✓ Use Your Letters to the Editor
- ✓ Create Short Explainer Videos on Social Media

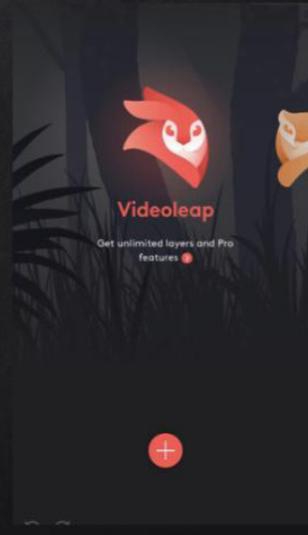
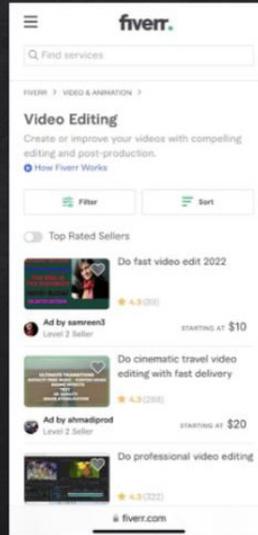
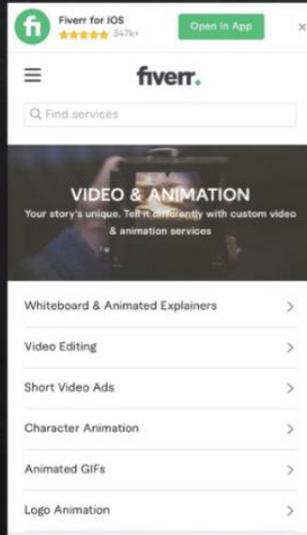
Goal:

1. Use the attack as an opportunity to show you are the better candidate.
2. Put them on defense!
3. The quicker you get the negative attention off you –the better!



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Video Making Services and Apps



SHORT VIDEOS

Create 30 sec video content for social media.

Set a goal of 3 videos per week (9 total).

Videos should focus on:

- ✓ Your core issues
- ✓ Why they should vote for you
- ✓ Get out the vote
- ✓ Thank yous to volunteers and supporters



Presentation template by SlidesCarnival. Photographs by Unsplash

CONCLUSION

Each of these ways to contact voters offer great value. Voter contact facilitates you being known to the community and each contact raises the likelihood that a particular voter will cast a vote for you. The data you collect during all of these interactions is key to creating effective messaging and controlling the narrative around your campaign. Therefore, it is imperative that you, as a candidate for office, take the time to go door-to-door campaigning, make phone calls, and send out mail pieces if your budget allows.

It is BEST's hope that you will take the lessons learned from this toolkit and apply them to your campaign. Using earned media will help catapult your campaign and your name I.D. in your community. All of the topics discussed in this toolkit will help bring your campaign to the next level.

BEST wishes you luck in your mission to take back school boards — one seat at a time.



FAQs

1. Can I run for school board if I send my kid(s) to a private school/homeschool?

- » The educrats have done a really good job at putting school board members in their box. As a school board member you were elected or are soon to be elected to represent the taxpayers and all constituents in your community. School board members are not elected to represent the school district. School board members are elected to serve all the children in your community, whether that be those in the traditional public schools, homeschool, private schools, or charter schools. Having a parent on the board that exercises educational freedom is a positive for any candidate to build into their campaign platform as it relates to parents knowing their children best and as a candidate they understand that not one learning environment is suited for every child.

2. How much does it cost to run a school board campaign?

- » This will be based on the size of your district and the number of registered voters in your election. To set realistic fundraising goals, it will be helpful to research the financial reports from the most recent previous school board races, which can be found online or at the elections office. A major factor to consider is whether or not you are running against an incumbent. Running against an incumbent is difficult but not impossible. You will need to be overly prepared to launch a strong door-to-door campaign because traditionally it will be easier for the incumbent to fundraise. However, if you have crafted a strong message on why it is time for new leadership your fundraising efforts could pay off. Set a campaign strategy to out work the incumbent because oftentimes the incumbents are arrogant and lazy campaigners. They will typically rely heavily on running a campaign based on mailers, radio, and media ads. However, elections are won at the door. Invest in a high-propensity voter list and use it to knock on as many doors as you and your team can possibly hit.

3. Someone else is already running on a pro-parent platform, should I enter the race as well?

- » First, meet with the candidate and understand who they are. You decide if this is someone that is electable. If they are a good candidate with good intentions and a strong campaign, do not divide the vote. The worst thing that could happen is that the race becomes too crowded. When trying to unseat an incumbent you will need to have a united coalition to succeed. No one wins when the election becomes about a person's ego.

CAMPAIGN TERMS TO KNOW

Absentee Voting

Voting by mail-in or absentee ballot. Many states allow absentee ballots by mail. Candidates must be prepared to launch their marketing to the absentee voters by the ballot drop date for these likely voters. Candidates will need to stay in contact with the elections office. Often, the elections office has a required window according to state statute, which sets the parameters of when the ballots must be mailed. Unprepared and new candidates can lose their election based on not understanding the importance of reaching this set of voters in time.

Bureaucracy

A bureaucracy is a way of administratively organizing large numbers of people who need to work together. Organizations in the public and private sector, including universities and governments, rely on bureaucracies to function. The term bureaucracy literally means “rule by desks or offices,” a definition that highlights the often impersonal character of bureaucracies. Even though bureaucracies sometimes seem inefficient or wasteful, setting up a bureaucracy helps ensure that thousands of people work together in compatible ways by defining everyone’s roles within a hierarchy.

Campaign Finance Reports

Obtain the reporting period schedule from the elections office when you file your candidate paperwork. These are regular scheduled reports submitted to state or county election officials outlining a campaign’s receipts and expenditures.

Almost all states require school board candidates to submit campaign finance reports. These are publicly published documents that disclose contributions, names of donors, in-kind contributions, outgoing expenses, and names of vendors. A wise candidate will keep track of their opponent(s) financial expense reports to gauge fundraising efforts and areas campaign marketing strategies.

Candidate Petitions

In most states, candidates can avoid paying a filing fee to get their name on the ballot or collecting signatures. An individual can opt out of collecting candidate petitions or paying a filing fee by becoming a write-in candidate; however, your ideal option is to always have your name printed on the ballot. There are many advantages to collecting petitions.

As a candidate, you have an opportunity through the petition process, as well as an excuse, to approach complete strangers and members of your community to introduce yourself. Signing a petition only says that the individual signing agrees to a candidate’s name being printed on the official candidates’ ballot.

Petitions are not universally required, so make sure you know the rules to qualify for the ballot in your state. Every state has different rules on the number of signatures you will need to collect. For example, in Ohio, a candidate might need 150 or less; but in Florida a candidate will need to collect signatures from 10% of the registered voters in their election.

CANDIDATE PETITION			
<p>Notes: - All information on this form becomes a public record upon receipt by the Supervisor of Elections. - It is a crime to knowingly sign more than one petition for a candidate. [Section 104.185, Florida Statutes] - If all requested information on this form is not completed, the form will not be valid as a Candidate Petition form.</p>			
<p>I, _____ the undersigned, a registered voter (print name as it appears on your voter information card)</p>			
<p>in said state and county, petition to have the name of _____ placed on the Primary/General Election Ballot as a: [check/complete box, as applicable]</p>			
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Nonpartisan <input type="checkbox"/> No party affiliation <input type="checkbox"/> _____ Party candidate for the office of _____ (insert title of office and include district, circuit, group, seat number, if applicable)</p>			
<p>Date of Birth or Voter Registration Number (MM/DD/YY)</p>		<p>Address</p>	
<p>City</p>	<p>County</p>	<p>State</p>	<p>Zip Code</p>
<p>Signature of Voter</p>		<p>Date Signed (MM/DD/YY) [to be completed by Voter]</p>	
Rule 1S-2.045, F.A.C.		DS-DE 104 (Eff. 09/11)	

Door Knocking

Also known as door-to-door (D2D) campaigning. The act of canvassing a neighborhood to identify and earn the vote. The most powerful form of campaigning is door-to-door campaigning. A strong grassroots door knocking campaign can take an opponent by surprise by tipping the numbers without disclosing the magnitude of the groundwork taking place behind the scenes. Paid campaigning is disclosed on financial reports—door-to-door strategies are kept within a candidate’s volunteer circle.

Early Voting

Voting in-person before Election Day typically takes place 10 days before the final day of election—although sometimes much earlier. Early voters can be tracked based on historical data of voting practices. Candidates will need to pace their budgets and time in order to connect with these voters before they head out to the ballot box.

Educrat

An educrat is a bureaucrat who has spent their entire career as a government employee working in education. The job of a bureaucrat is to implement government policy, to take the laws and decisions made by elected officials and put them into practice. However, an educrat is someone who abuses their position and implements policies in the manner they see is best for the system without consideration of the constituent.

Electoral College

The Electoral College is a group of citizens known as electors. Electors get appointed by each state to cast votes for the president and vice president of the United States on behalf of the state's citizens.

When you cast your vote for president, you tell your state's electors to cast their votes for the candidate you chose. For example, in Pennsylvania, each candidate for president chooses a list of electors. The electors for the candidate who wins Pennsylvania's popular vote get to cast their vote for president and vice president.

The Constitution created the Electoral College to ensure that each state had a role in selecting the president, no matter its population. Each state has the same number of electoral votes as it has members of Congress. There are a total of 538 votes in the Electoral College. A candidate must win a simple majority—270—of those votes to win the election.

Expenditures

A school district budgeting term. The money a school district spends from its budget on all services, salaries, and programs.

General Election

The general election determines which candidates will occupy the offices that are up for election. In partisan races, candidates that were nominated during the primary election compete for races alongside any candidates without political party affiliation. Nonpartisan races typically appear on the general election ballot as well, such as judicial, school and library board races.

General elections are always held in November and primary elections are in Spring/Summer.

High-Propensity Voter/Super Voter

A voter who has voted in all elections, primary or general, over a certain period of time, usually the last 4 cycles.

Letter to the Editor

A submission to a newspaper—online or print—from a candidate or a member of the community on a certain issue of local interest expressing an opinion, usually less than 250 words.

Mudslinging

A term to describe political attack messaging, coming in the form of press hits, ads, misinformation campaigns, or during candidate forums/debates.

Presidential Election

In presidential elections, each political party holds a national convention where they choose their nominee for president. The results of the primary election determine how votes from the states are cast at the convention.

The nominees from each party run against each other in the general election in November.

The president is officially elected by the Electoral College, and not the popular vote. But the popular vote—including your vote—helps decide which candidate receives your states electoral votes.

Press Release

An announcement officially submitted to the press on behalf of a campaign/candidate.

Press Statement

Similar to a press release, but formal statement submitted to the media in response to a current event. Utilized by candidates to earn media coverage to increase name recognition and support.

Primary Election

A primary election is held by political parties to select their nominees for the offices to be elected at the upcoming General Election. In a primary, Republicans run against other Republicans and Democrats run against other Democrats. And, of course, if other parties qualify to appear on the primary ballot, their candidates run against each other as well. During a primary, voters may choose only one party to vote for.

Each state varies but most school board elections are held during the primary based on it being a nonpartisan race. Some states will require school board races to hold a second election between the top primary candidates to run off in the general election.

Revenues

A school district finance term. The money received from federal, state, and local sources. Some revenues may be earmarked for specific programs.

Social Media

Online websites/platforms used for sharing information, events, and updates. Some examples include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Truth Social, etc.

Special Election

Special elections can occur when someone in office can no longer serve. This may happen when someone resigns, dies, or gets removed from office. In most cases the voters must select someone to replace that person, though this depends on state law. Some states allow for the Governor to appoint someone for the remainder of the term.

Special elections may be held during a general election, during a primary election, or on a different day designated by the elections office.

The county or counties running the special election must advertise the date and locations for the special election, as well as the candidates running for office.

Everyone who lives in the district the candidates will represent can vote in the special election.

Steering Committee

A committee set up by a candidate to assist with planning, managing, and running a campaign for political office.

Write-in Candidate

A candidate not on the ballot who runs a coordinated campaign to encourage supporters to write their name in on that section of the ballot. This is not advised and is an extremely difficult campaign strategy. However, write-in campaigns are not impossible; one was famously accomplished by Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) after losing the Republican primary for Alaska's US Senate seat in 2010.



For Additional Resources Visit
www.ParentsKnowBest.com