



# A GUIDE TO YOUR School District Board Meetings & Members

The school board of education is responsible for managing the district, including serving as a manager of the superintendent. School board members are elected by the people and represent specific schools and communities.

You have a right to attend your school district’s board meetings and engage with members of the board. The following information will be helpful for

### By law, school board meetings In Utah must:

- Be open to the public
- Provide posted notice of the meeting’s time and place
- Have a posted meeting agenda and minutes



### Finding a Board Meeting or Member

Your district’s board meetings and board members can be found on the district’s website, usually under its own heading (“**Board**”).

Sometimes, the board information is under another heading like “Community”. If you have trouble finding it, use the search bar to search “board” and **explore further**.

You may also scroll directly to the bottom of the district website for a contact number and ask questions by phone.

To access all school board meeting information and contact information, [visit visit utah.gov/pmn](http://visit.utah.gov/pmn).



## Planning to Comment at a Board Meeting

School districts are not required to allow the public to comment during a meeting, however boards typically set aside time to hear from the public at regular School Board meetings (but not always at study sessions or special meetings). Check your board's webpage to know whether you are required to provide notice to the board of your intent to comment.

*Ogden School District, for example, requires the public to inform the Office of the Superintendent of their desire to comment by noon at least two working days before the regular board meeting, or to sign up for public participation prior to the Board meeting*

This is especially important if you intend to participate virtually, in which case, you may need a participant link to the virtual platform. If you cannot find the board's rules posted, you can also reach out to the board member to ask about their public comment policy.



## Best Practices for Commenting at a Board Meeting



Keep your comment brief (3 minutes or less) and focused on your ask(s) around ARP ESSER funding, why it is important to act now, and what's at risk if the board doesn't.



Know that while your goal is to raise a specific topic for consideration or issue to the board's attention, their responsibility is to listen and learn from you.



If you're working with other parents, community members, or organizations, acknowledge them and your comment as representative of your shared interest in ARP ESSER funding going to the issues you all have identified.



Address your testimony to the board members and representatives, not the audience.



Be ready to respond to questions from the board if asked, including how you landed on your priorities for ESSER dollars and who you partnered with.



If they do not respond to your testimony, do not be alarmed. Final actions do not immediately follow public comment. Instead, plan to follow up and/or ask when they will address your concern(s).



## Template Public Comment on ARP ESSER Funding

Members of the \_\_\_\_\_ Board of Education,

My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I am the parent/guardian of a child at \_\_\_\_\_ in your school district. As you know, children across the country have been negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic with issues and challenges to their mental health, academic growth, social and emotional learning, and more. As a parent and key player in my child(ren)'s growth, learning, and healing from this experience, I am here today in regards to the millions of dollars our district is receiving through the American Rescue Plan ESSER Fund and to urge you to use these funds in ways that best serve our students.

The State Board of Education requires districts to allocate at least 20% of all funding towards learning loss, with an additional 80% of the funding available for flexible spending. As you determine where to spend this money between now and September 2023, I would ask that you consider:

- 1. Example A:** Schools like ABC Elementary currently have 1 guidance counselor on staff to support 300-400 students at any given time. If there is an opportunity to hire additional staff or invest in social-emotional learning programs for our school.
- 2. Example B:** XYZ organization currently offers summer learning opportunities that could be beneficial to students like mine. ARP ESSER funding is available and partnerships with community organizations like these would be a worthwhile investment, especially as schools experience staff changes and capacity limitations.
- 3. Example C:** My family is struggling with how to support learning at home and during school breaks. We would love support finding affordable materials that are similar to what you're using in schools and/or training resources for how to bridge the gap between work and home.

I urge you to consider including these ideas in your planning for the next two school years (2022-2023 and 2023-2024). I know these investments can make a difference in the lives of children and families like mine.

The pandemic has been a tough time for [district] students, but ESSER funds, thoughtfully allocated, is an opportunity for [district] and this board to move our students to not only recover but to excel. Thank you for your time and for considering my comments today.