

Pushing Back on Power-Hungry School Boards

A toolkit for citizens to pray and act in reclaiming their voice in our schools.

How did we get here?

So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. (Is 41:10)

In the fall of 2019, the Austin, TX Independent School Board met to determine if and how to implement a new sex education curriculum for the third through sixth grades in the Austin schools. In a school district with 81,650 children, only an estimated 100 people showed up, and only a few in that number dared to speak in opposition to the newly proposed expansion of the school's current sex education program. Austin schools already had in their classrooms a progressive sex education curriculum developed by the Planned Parenthood League of Massachusetts. The new curriculum would include more aggressive teaching of sexual identity. Local voices were too few, and the measure passed.

Fast forward to 2021. A lot has changed in two short years as school board meetings across the nation make the nightly news. Like those in Loudon County, VA, and Carroll, TX, concerned parents are attending school board meetings in great numbers and speaking out against Critical Race Theory (CRT) and sexuality curriculum. These determined parents have the potential to not only hold school boards accountable but change policies harmful to their children.

Parents are eager to know how their school board works. They are asking questions. How does a school board make decisions? How do I speak at a school board meeting? How do the parents of our school elect great school board members who will reflect the values of their community? Today's parents want to approve of the policies their school boards approve.

We pray parents will no longer be absent from their school board meetings but will remain active and vocal about all issues of their children's education. This is a new day as parents are attending meetings in great numbers. They are working together to influence their school boards to consider their concerns and reject CRT.



PRAY AND ACT

Send a Message

Let your elected officials know that parents, grandparents and citizens have the right to speak into the policies and curriculum of our schools. **[CLICK HERE TO SEND.](#)**

Learn more about CRT

[Click here](#) for more information about the harmful philosophy of Critical Race Theory.

A Biblical Worldview

[Click here](#) to download IFA's resource outlining a biblical worldview on education.

Parents are seeing problems

While the level of involvement we witness today should have happened many times over the last 40 years, as issues equally detrimental to our students came up in meetings, they were voted in because of a lack of parental involvement. We rejoice that the voices of parents with valid concerns are speaking out. These are the voices that have the potential to change education. We pray they will continue and not grow weary in their effort to change education for the good of our children and our nation.

Our response in prayer:

Father, Thank You, for sounding the alarm and bringing parents together to stand up for the ungodly instruction perpetrated on their children in our public schools. I ask You give Your people the courage, strength, and endurance to take on the challenges we, our children, and our nation now face. Let our voices be strong and unwavering as we speak the truth in love.

At this crossroads in America's education, I ask for a reformation and a restoration of morals and values in the hearts and minds of our students, teachers, administrators, and school board members. I thank you that You are a God who hears and answers prayer, and You will not fail us in our time of need but will restore our schools and the hearts of our children. I pray this in the Name of Jesus. Amen.

The School Board's Rise to Power

When the foundations are being destroyed, what can the righteous do? (Ps 11:3)

The first school boards in American began in 1647 when the Massachusetts Bay Colony mandated that every town establish a public school within its jurisdiction. Local citizens came together and formed committees to run the schools. The intent was to give communities a voice in how their children were taught. In 1776, when the United States Constitution was adopted, education remained locally controlled, but power over schools was granted to the states under the Tenth Amendment.

In the 1820s, Massachusetts required the committees that governed schools to be independent of local governments, assuring parents would remain in control of their children's education. School districts were to be autonomous and independent of local and federal governments. Over the years, the federal government's authority has often overruled a state's authority and, consequently, the school boards' authority, removing parental control over schools.

For over 250 years, public school boards followed the original model of one school board per community and, in most cases, one school board per school. Things were much simpler as community elders were the ones who decided their community's need for a school. Most often, a group would come together to select a teacher, decide how the teacher would be paid (usually not much), build a schoolhouse, and oversee the affairs of the daily operations. If they hired a teacher who couldn't teach or who couldn't handle the rigors of rural frontier life, that teacher would be fired, and another one hired to take the job. Even John Dewey, the Father of Progressive Education, felt the wrath of a local school board. Mr. Dewey took a teaching position in Oil City, PA. It seems he had multiple problems in the classroom, and after two years (1880-1881), he was dismissed from his position. One school board member later stated, "We ran Mr. Dewey out of town on a rail." This gives us an example of how a school board once operated.

The School Board's Rise to Power

Local school boards served their communities and remained relevant to the needs and wishes of the parents. In 1930, education changed, adopting policies and ideas of progressive educators. At the beginning of the century, there were 150,000 local school boards. As cities became larger, so did school districts. The progressive educators pushed the consolidation of schools under the guise of cost-effectiveness. They reasoned larger districts would require fewer resources, freeing money for things like textbooks, teacher pay, school libraries, etc. The reasoning sounded good but ultimately was a dismal failure. John A. Stormer, in his book ***None Dare Call it Education***, states that currently only 12,800 school districts remain. As a result, parents, along with their communities, lost their voice in their local schools. The federal government filled the gap with federal programs until today. We now have schools where parents have little to no say in their child's education. We stand in danger of losing our way of life.

Some larger school districts voted not to elect their school board members but chose to appoint their school boards. For example, the third-largest school district in our nation, Chicago Public Schools has 655 schools with over 408,000 students. Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot appoints the seven people who serve on the Chicago Public Schools school board.

Seventy-five percent of school board members serve the smaller communities of our nation and receive no compensation for their service. Chicago's appointed board members receive \$40,000 per year.

Books and curriculum pushing anti-biblical messages have infiltrated our schools.



The larger a school district becomes, the propensity for corruption increases. School board members can be a local portal into corruption and cronyism as they have more direct control over hiring and firing school personnel, school supply providers, construction contractors, etc. Fewer watchdogs keep up on what is happening in larger districts, especially regarding special interest groups, outside consultants, political friends, and liberal agendas.

Larger school districts are also more prone to engage in contentious elections that require a larger campaign budget to defeat, making running for office more expensive. To get elected, candidates in need of campaign funds may align with special interest groups that give to their campaign in exchange for favors later on.

In her book ***Battling Corruption in America's Public Schools***, Lydia Segal chronicles the investigation of a thirty-year school board corruption scandal in NYC. Segal points to a lack of accountability of the board and low voter turnout as the two main short fallings that kept corrupt members in office. No one publicly held the corrupt members accountable, and voters, not showing up to vote, allowed the corruption to spread like cancer across all the NYC schools. Sadly, sometimes as few as 100 votes could determine the election of someone running for a seat on the NYC school board; often, those votes were purchased with a bribe.

The School Board's Rise to Power

School boards distanced from the parents are notorious for holding secret meetings to keep dissenting voices being heard. Out of frustration and disinterest, busy parents often leave school decisions up to the school board. Decisions made by school boards might not be liked by the parents but were overlooked. Because CRT dealt a severe blow to racial equality parents, felt they could no longer remain silent. Something had to be done. Parents are beginning to look for ways to speak at school board meetings, run for school board positions, and participate in campaigns for candidates who hold the views of their communities.

Intercessors for America is here to help. We encourage prayer for schools and school boards across America. We also encourage those who want to run for a school board position to do so. Our prayer is that everyone will become involved in the transformation of our schools. We see God's hand in what is happening in education and encourage everyone to continue to pray for a total transformation in the cultural mountain of education.



Children spend an average of 1,195.2 hours per year in instruction and influence in public schools.

Our response in prayer:

Father, I pray for the restoration of local control of our neighborhood schools. Bring us godly men and women of influence, with hearts to serve their community, who will run and be elected for school board positions. Give us bold men and women of integrity who will not compromise with the world. Let them not shrink back from the battle that wages for the souls of our children. Give them the backbone to stand up for Christian values and principles. Let them be moral, proactive, and sacrificial in their zeal for implementing godly principles. Let them make godly decisions based on Your Word and not on man's reasoning or political correctness. I pray this in the Name of Jesus. Amen.

How to Speak at a School Board Meeting

Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you, declares the Lord. (Jer 1:8)

The routine school board meetings that once met in relative obscurity are now hotbeds of discussions as parents and concerned citizens rally to address the offensive curriculum that divides our nation, like Critical Race Theory (CRT). Today, it is not unusual for heated school board meetings like Loudoun County, VA, to take a prime spot on the nightly national news. This is what happened recently when the school board chairman shut down the meeting, refused to allow parents to speak, called the police, and demanded police arrest two parents. The upheaval left more than 100 parents who signed up to speak unable to do so.

Loudoun parents, not able to reason with the members of their school board, are in the process of initiating recall petitions as one way to save their students from the racially divisive curriculum taught in their schools. But, while Loudoun County parents may be in the nightly national news, it is by no means the only battle between parents and school boards currently happening in our nation. Concerned parents and citizens who realize the danger of CRT and how quickly it is being introduced to our students want their voices heard.

As a believer, God wants you to speak out, and He says so in Leviticus 5:1. If a person sins because he does not speak up when he hears a public charge to testify regarding something he has seen or learned about, he will be held responsible. Our commission is clear.

The majority of opposition is to curricula that teach Critical Race Theory. Still, other issues can be equally as offensive: sexual identity, biological males participating in women's sports, white supremacy taught in math class, the 1619 Project, equity learning, or action civics. In any case, the local school board is the ideal place to start. Their oversight and duties are critical to the operation of a school. The people who sit on your local school board are the unseen decision-makers in your child's schooling.

If you decide to speak at your local school board meeting, here are 14 simple pointers to make the most impact:

- Build a prayer team to support you in your time of preparation and during your presentation.
- Go to your school district's website. There you will find a wealth of information about the school board's duties, schedules, and committees on which the different members serve. You will find on the site the time and location of their meetings. Be sure to call the school's administrative office to verify the meeting time and place, as websites may not reflect recent changes. It's also not uncommon for a school board to call a secret meeting or move the location to deter attendance.
- The school district's website will give directions on how to sign up to speak—included will be how to sign up to speak, how much time you will be given to express your concerns and a deadline for when to sign up.
- If possible, attend at least one school board meeting before you take on speaking.
- Learn the names of the school board members and the committees on which they serve. This information will help you determine the board member to whom your question should be addressed.
- From the website, or from asking someone who has previously spoken if you are allowed to express your opinion? Or are you only to ask the board questions?

How to Speak at a School Board Meeting

- When asked to speak, state your name and the reason why you are there.
- Most boards will ask you to sit down if you make abusive, defamatory, or personal statements against anyone.
- Stay within your time frame.
- Write out what you want to say and time your speech in advance. Submit a copy to the board for their records.
- If you are nervous, you do not have to make eye contact with the board members. Most likely, you will not change the board's opinion, and they may be too busy on their cell phones to pay attention to you. Also, if you are new, distractions may make you nervous. The important thing is that your speech, once presented, will be a matter of record.
- You can be passionate, you can be loud, but it is to your benefit to be respectful.
- When addressing the school board, do some research and know why that particular issue is important. If you feel strongly about certain issues like CRT or sexuality curriculum and have not done as much research as you need, express your concerns as your opinions. You are less likely to get challenged by your presentation if you are giving an opinion.
- Regardless of what happens, don't back down. Stand firm for truth and righteousness.

While school board numbers across the nation have diminished, the stronghold of liberal policies and procedures has multiplied. When you speak, you will be coming against a powerful stronghold in our nation that holds the future of our students in their hands, a position the powers of darkness do not want to relinquish. Prayer support is always needed.



Children as young as 4 are being taught about sexual identity.

Our response in prayer:

Father, I ask You to consider the threats of those who intend harm to the students in our schools. Grant Your servants who take a stand against ungodliness a holy boldness to speak with authority for the rights and protection of every student in our public schools. Silence those who would interrupt or create confusion. Let the words of truth be spoken by the power of the Holy Spirit to bring healing to those broken by evil teaching and restoration to the wounded in spirit. I pray this in the Name of Jesus. Amen.

How to conduct a community-driven campaign

He ransoms me unharmed from the battle waged against me, even though many oppose me. (Ps 55:19)

It's important to know the educational/political climate of your school district. Not just know whether your district is primarily Republican or Democrat, but know how your community as a whole feels about important issues. It will take a lot of like-minded people coming together in unity to defeat CRT. One of the best examples of a successful school board campaign happened recently in Southlake, TX. The parents were able to stop the onslaught of CRT in their school district.

On May 1, 2021, the parents in Southlake, TX, celebrated when two new school board members received almost 70 percent of the votes in a high turnout school board election. It had been a difficult three years for Southlake's Carroll Independent School District (ISD). Their trouble began in the fall of 2018 when a video of several Carroll ISD students singing a rap went viral. The song included racial slurs. Under fire from high-profile activists accusing the school of racial prejudice, the school district quickly implemented a 34 page Cultural Competence Action Plan (CCAP). CCAP included a Five Year Plan in Carroll ISD to indoctrinate the teachers, staff, and students into racially divided groups and, ultimately, communist Marxism.

First, Carroll ISD school board hired a full-time Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer to manage the plan's implementation, which included a long list of activities that would ensure the staff and students were thoroughly cleansed of their whiteness and racial prejudice. A total of six subcommittees would be formed to oversee and develop the CCAP for the next five years.

Parents who realized the gravity of the Carroll ISD's radical agenda then rallied their community to start an action plan that evolved into a possible blueprint for other communities wishing to push back CRT in their local school districts. The community began meeting in small groups to discuss how to best go forward.

Their action plan included:

- The use of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests to gather pertinent information, which later was used in the criminal indictment of the Carroll ISD School Board president and vice president.
- Realizing their opposition was strong, they looked for qualified candidates to run for a school board position who were professional in their conduct. Their potential candidates also reflected the values of the community.
- They started early. Beginning in 2020 they began their work to build a grassroots base of like-minded individuals. They organized their district in blocks and initiated walking campaigns, knocking on doors and meeting the people face to face.
- They organized multiple meet-and-greets across their districts.

Southlake, whose children attended Carroll ISD, turned out in record numbers to vote for two school board seats, resulting in a hardy victory for their community's parents and citizens. The Southlake parents showed what is done when dedicated parents come together in unity to plan and work. Because of their efforts, school board elections may never be the same. (1 Pt 3:12)

How to conduct a community-driven campaign

Our response in prayer:

Father, I pray for righteous and bold men and women who will run for school board positions. Let them run the race with patience and endurance, always seeking Your strategies first above all the clamor of a busy campaign. Surround them with staff and volunteers who will give godly advice and who will work together in unity to achieve the prize of winning. We pray for school boards to be upended across America as You put Your people in positions to transform America's public schools. I ask this in Jesus' Name. Amen.

How to be a successful school board candidate

Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go. (Jos 1:9)

School board members have a weighty list of responsibilities. They influence and impact a lot of children, as well as parents and the extended community. A shortlist of the responsibilities of a local school board can include the following:

- Determining school policy
- Curriculum selection
- Superintendent hiring/dismissal
- Teacher hiring/dismissal
- Annual school budget
- Overseeing construction projects
- Approving contracts with outside vendors

Suppose you're thinking about running but not sure. In that case, you will need to evaluate your background, current involvement in your community, your ability to raise funds, as well as your ability to commit the time required to be a school board member. An excellent resource to help you determine why you want to run is **[How to Run a School Board Campaign](#)** by Team XQ.

Running for a public office is not for the faint of heart. The effort must be at the deepest level a God calling and a passion at the basic level.

Gary Stanislawski served as a school board member for eight years for the Jenks Independent School District in Oklahoma. Having been through several school board election cycles, Gary has excellent experience in what he knows a good candidate needs to do to have a successful election. Gary helped prepare the following list for someone thinking of running for a school board position. He offers some great advice for anyone wishing to run for office:

- Start your campaign early - the earlier, the better. He suggests two years out from the election date is ideal. Too many people finally decide to run too late. I've had people come to me for advice about whether or not to run as late as two weeks before the deadline for filing. By that time, they had no way to get the momentum needed to launch a successful campaign.
- Be willing to work hard. You have to be willing to put in the time to work hard to win. When I ran, I decided to work five hours a day for six days a week toward the success of my campaign. Those long hard hours paid off when I won.

How to be a successful school board candidate

- Know why you are running and what you are running for. Run for something, don't run against something. You can't just be against CRT; you must be for racial equality for everyone.
- Determine why you are running. Prepare three concise and positive sentences ready on demand to give to anyone who asks you why you are running for a school board position.
- Repeat your message over and over until people get it!
- Be a self-promoter. Tell people why you would be a great asset to their local school board.
- Stay on message. When asked questions, answer the question, don't wander off talking about something beyond the scope of what you were asked.
- Be knowledgeable about your school district. Study any adverse curricula like CRT and any other issues facing your school district.
- Be willing to raise funds. You don't have to raise the most money, but you have to raise enough to get your message out. Many people have a righteous cause but fail to raise the money to get the word out. Develop a budget that includes, along with the cost of fundraising, the cost of yard signs, banners, ads for radio, newspaper, and digital outlets, and phone banking.
- Boost your message through social media and frequently post videos as well as campaign updates.
- Become comfortable in front of a camera. Practice until you can conduct a competent on-your-feet interview and produce short videos for your website as well as other outlets.
- As much as possible, become a friend of the press. Always give them truthful and relevant information.
- Never give up. Don't look at the polls for guidance other than to let you know when you need to work harder.
- Gary's last piece of advice: Get people to pray for you. Bring people around you who are people who will faithfully pray for you, especially when the going gets tough, and it will. Build a community of people of prayer.

Our response in prayer:

Father, I pray for righteous and bold men and women who will run for school board positions. Let them run the race with patience and endurance, always seeking Your strategies first above all the clamor of a busy campaign. Surround them with staff and volunteers who will give godly advice and who will work together in unity to achieve the prize of winning. We pray for school boards to be upended across America as You put Your people in positions to transform America's public schools. I ask this in Jesus' Name. Amen.

Lessons Learned from the Adversary

During that night the Lord said to Gideon, “Get up, do down against the camp...and listen to what they are saying. Afterward, you will be encouraged to attack the camp.” (Jdg 7:9-10)

One of the best places to look at those who oppose you is to observe the National Education Association's involvement in your community and your state.

The National Education Association (NEA) considers school board elections of significant importance, so should you. As the most powerful labor union in the United States, the NEA's major concerns are promoting their liberal agenda and providing pay raises for their Union members.

It is so important that the [NEA website](#) has a virtual program to train educators to run for school board positions. [See Educators Run](#) is a comprehensive program that coaches potential candidates in every aspect of conducting a successful election. Interested candidates are taught how to secure funding for their campaign, presentation techniques for conducting media interviews, soliciting volunteers to call and knock on doors, and obtaining favorable press coverage.

The NEA realized in the 1980s that if they were to win with their plan to fight the so-called Radical Right, their long-term action plan would be to get more NEA member educators elected to School Boards as well as positions in state congresses.

Take a visit to the [NEA website, where you will meet an NEA member](#), Kyrstin Delagardelle Shelly, a schoolteacher from Des Moines, Iowa, who decided to run for a seat on the Des Moines school board. After attending the NEA training program for potential candidates, Krystin said, “After I left the See Educators Run training, we hit the ground running.” The NEA coached, sponsored, and taught Kyrstin to raise funds for her election victory. Kyrstin had never run for office. When asked why she decided to run, she gave a politically correct NEA answer, “She was frustrated by increasing attacks on public education from politicians, she decided to run for the Des Moines School Board.”

The NEA is a liberal organization that fully endorses CRT and a myriad of other social and morally adverse issues. Prior to the 2020 election, the NEA published a wish-list titled Playbook for the Biden-Harris Administration. The playbook is a wake-up call to all of us to be not only aware but also proactive. These plans will harm our children and our nation. Read it prayerfully to hear God's voice on strategies to stop the onslaught of evil against our students.



The NEA is a liberal organization

Our response in prayer:

Father, thank You. The enemy has shown his strategies. I will take note and be wise as a serpent and harmless as a dove. I will walk in integrity and be truthful in all my dealings. Where it exists, I will dislodge corruption, deception, laziness, and cronyism. The position You give me will be received as an assignment from God. I will daily ask for wisdom and understanding. I will acknowledge You in all my ways, and You will give light to my path. I pray this in the Name of Jesus. Amen.

The importance of School Boards

Walk with the wise and become wise, for a companion of fools suffers harm. (Prv 13:20)

The importance of school boards cannot be overemphasized as historically, they operated as the backbone of the community with a voice into schools, often bringing local reason against adverse outside influence. School boards help to preserve the American tradition of local communities controlling their destinies.

Over the years, voter turnout has diminished for local school board elections. It is of utmost importance that Christians wake up and participate in the election process. Often held separate from the regular county, state, and local elections, school board elections do well to attract 5% to 10% of registered voters in a district. With a low voter base, the lack of accountability increases as corrupt board members can easily remain in power if they are not voted out. A good website for information on school district elections, dates, and candidates running is: [School Boards and School Board Elections - Ballotpedia.](#)



A handful of people are directing the course of schooling in your community.

Needed are school board members with a solid moral compass who will serve their communities and their children with strength and dignity. Let's pray for those candidates to come forward.

In 2017, shortly before his death, John Taylor Gatto, two-time New York State Teacher of the Year, wrote a chapter on the importance of school boards in his best-selling book, ***The Underground History of American Education***. His concluding paragraph says:

A relative handful of people could change the course of schooling significantly by resisting the suffocating advance of centralization and standardization of children, by being imaginative and determined in their resistance, by exploiting manifold weaknesses in the institution's internal coherence: the disloyalty its own employees find toward it. It took 150 years to build this apparatus; it won't quit breathing overnight. The formula is to take a deep breath, then select five smooth stones, and let fly.