

TAKE PRIDE



IN YOUR LOCAL SCHOOL BOARD!

What is a school board and what do they do?

A school board is a group of people who make decisions for the school system. They work within the rules and laws set by the state. School board members are elected by the people who live within the school district; therefore, the school board should represent the community's interests and provide quality education for all students.

What do school boards have the power to do?

The main responsibilities of your local school board are:

- Hiring and Managing the Superintendent
- Setting District Policies
- Developing the District's Annual Budget

What can this mean for the 2SLGBTQIA+ community?

- They can write inclusion policies for restroom access, curricula, anti bullying, and other programs that affirm and support 2SLGBTQIA+ youth.
- They can pass hiring and job protections for 2SLGBTQIA+ staff and educators such as non-discrimination and anti-harassment.
- They can provide/allocate funding to convert facilities to be inclusive, and to fund GSAs and other programs to support 2SLGBTQIA+ youth through state resources.

How do I know who is on my school board?

- Visit your school district's website and search "School Board"
 - They may also be called "Trustees," "Board Directors," "Board Members," "Board of Education," or "Education Coordinators."
- You can also find information under headings such as "Departments," "About," or "About Us."
- Recent School Board election information is also posted on the [Secretary of State Website](http://www.mnvotes.gov), (www.mnvotes.gov)

What should I know to engage with my local school board?

Every school board is unique. To be an effective advocate, here are some things to look for:

- When and where are full board meetings held?
- When and where are agendas posted?
- Which meetings are live-streamed or recorded and posted online?
- Where and when are meeting minutes posted for public review?
- What are the board committees?
- What are the policies around public comments?

How do I best engage with School Board members?

- **Request a phone or in-person meeting**
 - Find a time that works for both of your schedules and be respectful of their (and your) limited time.
 - In-person meetings should happen in a public space, like a coffee shop or district office.
 - Let them know in advance what you want to discuss with them so they have time to prepare and get the information you need.
 - Be transparent ahead of time about who will attend the meeting.
 - Focus on your story and/or experiences.
 - Communicate respectfully to keep the conversation safe and productive.
- **Send them an email or letter**
 - Contact information and procedures for school board member communication can be found on your district's website.
 - Briefly state why you are sending the email/letter and what is important to you.
 - Share your personal story and emphasize how their decisions will impact students in the district.
 - Tell them how you are connected to the community.
 - If you are a parent, student, alumni, community member, or teacher, they will value your email or letter more.
 - If possible, prioritize sending a personal email over a prewritten form or template.
 - It's better to send a personal email and let them know in the email if you are a part of a more significant movement.
 - Keep it short.
 - Due to the volume of messages board members receive, short letters are more likely to be read and considered in full.
 - As always, keep it respectful.
 - Be passionate about your issue without resorting to personal attacks this helps remain on task, on topic and have your message heard.

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