

Most boards allow 3 minutes for public comment. A 3 minute long speech will have **about 350 words**. Practice your speech ahead of time and make sure it is 3 minutes or less! (Check other tips on the next page of this document).

The goal with public comment is to be concise about what you are asking the board to do AND help them see you as a person (and constituent) through your personal story. Keep in mind that often your intended audience is not only the school board, but the wider public. You would be surprised how many people watch these meetings!

Section	What you are talking about	Example
Opening	Greet the Superintendent and Board Introduce yourself and include any relevant qualifications (if you are a parent of a student in the system that's an important qualification!)	<i>"My name is Amy Harrison and I live in Whitsett, NC. I am a special education teacher here in Greensboro."</i>
What is your topic? What do you want the board to do?	Introduce your topic and actions you want the board to take. Just name the actions here, go into detail later.	<i>"I would like to talk to you all tonight about the need for the county school construction bond..."</i>
What is the problem? Why do you want the board to take action?	State clearly the problem you see and why the board taking action is important.	<i>"I am pretty blessed to be at one of the newer schools in the county but I talk to many educators across the district on a regular basis and they have shared horror stories about the conditions in their work sites."</i>
Include a personal story connected to the problem.	How does this affect you or your child? Include specific details related to academic and emotional impacts this problem has had.	<i>"When it rains, roofs leak. When it is cold, there is no heat. When it is hot, there is no air conditioning. Would you want to work in an environment like that?"</i>
What do you want the board to do and how is it a solution to the problem?	Suggest 1-3 related solutions with supporting points backed by facts. Keep on topic related to what you want the board to do.	<i>"It is vital that the bond is put before the voters in November. Our schools need to have some serious updates and</i>

		<i>improvements to provide an equitable education for all of the students in Guilford County."</i>
Closing	<p>Touch in your personal story again and reiterate the impact the board can make if they take your comments under advisement.</p> <p>Thank the Superintendent/ Board for considering/ taking on what you want them to do.</p>	<p><i>"Our students deserve to learn in an environment that is safe and a building that isn't leaking and has working heat and air. Our educators deserve to work in an environment that is safe and a building that isn't leaking and has working heat and air.</i></p> <p><i>I appreciate your time tonight and service to the citizens of Guilford County, the employees of Guilford County Schools, and the students of Guilford County Schools."</i></p>

Tips:

- Learn your district's procedure to sign up to speak during the public comment section. This is important, every district is a little different.
- Practice your speech ahead of time with a friend or record yourself to make sure you are 3 minutes or under.
- Speak to your audience- try not to read line for line if you can- big print helps.
- Try not to stress about the timer but also have your final sentence ready when it's time to wrap up- our goal is to convince the board and the wider public, not challenge current time limits.
- Say what you mean in a straightforward way and avoid lingo.
- Can you back up your feelings with facts? If so, great! But also remember it's not your job to be an expert in all things, you are speaking to a democratically elected school board and you are a constituent.
- Breathe! You're going to do great! :)