

**War of the Words:**

**Public Comment at Open Meetings**

(aka "How to Navigate the Stifle-Your-Lough School Board Challenge")

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An illustration of a man in a dark blue suit and white shirt speaking at a wooden podium. To his right are two flagpoles; the one closer to him has a teal flag, and the one further away has a yellow flag. The background is a light beige color with horizontal lines.

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An illustration of a woman with blonde hair, wearing a dark suit and a red pin, speaking into a microphone at a wooden podium. The background is a light beige color with horizontal lines.

**Public  
Comment:**

**The Karen Show**

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**This presentation is NOT about...**

<b>01</b> <b>First Amendment</b> You can't say that in the middle of a school board meeting!!!	<b>02</b> <b>Transgenderism</b> Which kid uses which bathroom and locker room?!?
<b>03</b> <b>Porn in the Library</b> <i>All Lawn Boys Aren't The Bluest Eye</i> is an objectively lousy read anyway.	<b>04</b> <b>Football Win-Loss Records</b> This is Texas, so yes, it actually matters to someone attending your meeting.

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**...and this presentation is ALL about...**

<b>01</b> <b>First Amendment</b> You can't say that in the middle of a school board meeting!!!	<b>02</b> <b>Transgenderism</b> Which kid uses which bathroom and locker room?!?
<b>03</b> <b>Porn in the Library</b> <i>All Lawn Boys Aren't The Bluest Eye</i> is an objectively lousy read anyway.	<b>04</b> <b>Football Win-Loss Records</b> This is Texas, so yes, it actually matters to someone attending your meeting.

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## Public Comment Basics



### Mandatory

Must a school board hear public comments at every meeting? How many, or for how long?



### Boundaries

How can a school board control the course of public comments at a meeting?



### Challenges

How can a school board respond to matters presented during public comment?

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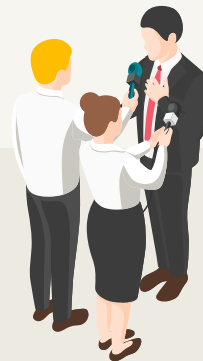
## The Very Basics: Texas Open Meetings Act

The public's right to comment at an open meeting arises under the Texas Open Meetings Act.  
TEXAS GOV'T CODE Chapter 551, and specifically, § 551.007.

### **IMPORTANT FREE RESOURCE:**

Get the OAG's Handbook!

[https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/sites/default/files/files/divisions/open-government/openmeetings\\_hb.pdf](https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/sites/default/files/files/divisions/open-government/openmeetings_hb.pdf)



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38<sup>th</sup> Annual School Law Conference session

"War of the Words: Public Comment at Open Meetings"