

War of the Words:

Public Comment at Open Meetings

(aka “How to Navigate the Stifle-Your-Laugh School Board Challenge”)

Presented by John M. Hardy
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An illustration of a man in a dark blue suit and white shirt standing at a wooden podium, gesturing with his right hand. Behind him are two flagpoles; the left one has a blue flag and the right one has a yellow flag. The background is a light beige color with horizontal lines.

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Public Comment:

The Karen Show

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

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This presentation is NOT about...

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


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

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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



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