

# Commentary: Supporting public school boards can be ministry

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When you think of “public education advocacy,” you probably picture the Capitol building in Austin. But did you know your voice can be just as effective, if not more, by staying right where you are?

Local advocacy to and for a superintendent or school administrators is an important part of the mission of Pastors for Texas Children. You can read more about that [here](#). But also important is advocacy to and for school board members.

Over the last several years, school board elections in Texas have become far more competitive and partisan, even though these are nonpartisan positions. Certain groups on the left and the right have sought to control our schools by funding candidates who will push their agenda through.

A 2017 [Texas Monthly article](#) about the future of school boards and city councils says:

“Whether the city council and school board elections of Texas should or shouldn’t become partisan really isn’t the question. That’s happening whether we like it or not. The question is whether partisan elections will turn our local governments into Washington-style gridlock. Will issues be chosen for the scorecard of the next election? Or will school boards be deciding whether a new school is built or the roof is repaired on an old one so that children are not forced to learn while rainwater splashed into the bucket next to their desk?”

# Ministering publicly

The public comment portion of school board meetings is longer than it used to be, as more and more of the public is showing up to speak.

Just recently a group of unhappy parents organized and met prior to a board meeting to prepare their comments. Many of them had pulled their children from public schools but were still on a mission to change the course of the district. At the board meeting, they revealed their plans to unseat those board members who are up for reelection.

To be clear, there is nothing wrong with this in itself. It is part of democracy and civic engagement. But it also illustrates the tremendous pressure members of our school board face, especially in times like this when every decision they make will alienate or anger some parents.

In that same board meeting, one parent approached the microphone and said: "Hello, I am here to offer my support to you. My daughter is very happy and thriving at her school. That's what matters to me. I believe you are doing a great job in a very difficult time, and you are receiving a lot of criticism. Just keep in mind that there are many more parents out there who are not as vocal, but who appreciate you and your leadership."

What a great example of how your advocacy can be a ministry!

If you don't know your school board member, make it a point to reach out. Offer him or her your prayers and a listening ear. Many of them will be facing opponents in their next election, and along with it, an increased amount of campaigning and fundraising. Many of them are not interested in contentious politics; they are interested in the work of providing our children with a high-quality education.

And we are grateful.

*Cameron Vickrey is the associate director of Pastors for Texas Children, a ministry that serves Texas' neighborhood public schools through prayer, service, and advocacy. This article is adapted and republished by permission.*