

Workbook 3.

MAKE YOUR CASE, RAISE YOUR VOICE

This section will help you go piece by piece to take a big task—articulating your reasons for running—and break it down into its component parts. Your writing here can inform a stump speech—a tool you can use to reach out to and resonate with voters and volunteers while on the campaign trail.

Make a Personal Appeal

- 1. At their best, what do I believe great high schools offer a community? What do they look like? What do they prepare their students for, and what do they give back to the community?**

I believe that the community gains when high schools are at their best because...

- 2. Why do I want to take a leadership role on our district school board?**

I personally care about education, and specifically our district's high schools, because...

- 3. If I am entrusted with a seat on our local school board, what principles of process — transparency, a willingness to listen, accountability, etc.—would I emphasize?**

If I am entrusted with a seat on our local school board, voters could expect that I would ...

Establish the Facts

4. When I look closely at the data about my district and all the other things I've learned, what do I see as our top three strengths?

Our strengths are... and we should be proud, because...

5. But if I'm truly being honest, what are the top three areas where we need to improve? What evidence and examples would I cite?

The key areas we need to address are... because...

6. And again, being truly transparent, what do these weaknesses or challenges cost our students and our community as a whole? What do I think the root causes are?

I believe that the challenges our high school faces affect our students and our community by...

Set a Vision for the Future

7. What do we stand to gain as a community by purposefully turning our attention to our high schools and addressing their weaknesses?

If we turn our high schools' weaknesses today into strengths tomorrow, we would gain...

8. With no idea being too big or too small, what are three ways we could “rethink, reshape, redesign” our high schools to address their weaknesses and build a better future?

Three possibilities for using our unique community resources are...

A

B

C

9. Who would I engage to reimagine the future of our local high schools and their students? Who would be our coalition for change?

I would work to engage and empower a community coalition that consisted of...

10. How are we incorporating student voice into our community's education decision-making?

I would implement progress measuring tools and accountability practices by...

FIND YOUR VOICE: CAMPAIGN SPEAKING TIPS AND TRICKS

● Let your **VALUES** do the talking.

Policy priorities may change, but your values must remain consistent. Communicating those values demonstrates to people in your community that you're grounded. That you have a core set of principles where ideas flow from. Those values should serve as the foundation for your messaging platform.

- If you believe that every child deserves access to a quality education, regardless of where they live or their financial circumstances—say it.
- If you believe that parents deserve a seat at the table and should weigh in on school discipline policies, develop strategic partnerships with teachers and administrators, and serve on advisory committees—say it.
- If you believe that issues of deep concern to students and families, issues like gun violence, drug addiction, or income inequality, deserve candid public discussion—say it.
- See what we mean? The most effective and authentic tool in your message artillery is you. And that's exactly why your campaign slogans, talking points, and political material should be inspired by your values, the stories that punctuate your community, and the facts and stats that make your case.

● Make your case with **DATA** and **STORIES**.

Your values are the foundation. And the stories you've heard and the data that you've uncovered are the building blocks of your foundation of values. Keep the notes you've made handy and refer to them often. Combine the stories and the data into memorable messages that give partners—the people you've worked so hard to listen to, and learn from—a voice in your campaign. The more people you bring into the fold, the more inclusive, well-rounded, and engaging your campaign becomes.

● Pivot to **SOLUTIONS**.

Now that you've stated the facts and stories, it's time to pivot toward solutions. It's not enough to demand change. Being a leader calls for demonstrating your ideas, proposals, and action plan. Talk about the need for strong parent-teacher collaborations to ensure that America's next generation of leaders is prepared to think, communicate, and succeed. Highlight the importance of schools developing partnerships within the community so that students have more opportunities to apply what they're learning in the classroom in the real world.

● Sound a clear **CALL TO ACTION**.

By this point in your speech, they know who you are, they know your values, they know that you're well-versed on the issues and that you care. They've also heard your ideas. Close with a clear call to action—a direct address to the audience, that tells them what you hope your words will motivate them to do. You want their vote? Ask for it. You need their support? Ask for it. You want them to join and volunteer on your campaign? Ask for it. If this feels uncomfortable at first, remember—you're not promoting yourself, but rather, the issues you care about and are committed to.