



# Run for What Matters:

## A Starting Point for Running for School Board

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If you or someone you know is considering a run for school board, you don't need to start with a campaign plan or all the answers. You can start with a few simple steps and a **grounding in what matters** to you and your community.

Across the country, school boards make decisions that shape the daily experiences of millions of students. Through governance and guidance, elected school board members help determine whether students feel safe, supported, and able to thrive in their schools.

And right now, the stakes are especially high for LGBTQ+ students, families, and educators. School board elections are shaping the future of public education and our communities. In many places, these races are decided by a small number of voters, meaning local leadership can have a powerful impact.

We need leaders who believe LGBTQ+ students deserve to live, learn, and thrive openly in school. Leaders who will stand up for dignity, belonging, safety, and inclusive public education while rejecting fear, censorship, and exclusion.

So it starts with a simple question:

**What kind of public schools do we want for our communities and what role do you want to play in shaping them?**

Because in this moment, it **MATTERS**.





# M EET THE MOMENT

Across the country, school boards have become a flashpoint for coordinated efforts rooted in fear, censorship, and misinformation that target LGBTQ+ students and inclusive public education.

Nationalized discourse at the school board level shapes the culture, policies, and daily experiences of students, families, and educators locally.

School boards make decisions about:

- + Student safety, belonging, and school culture
- + Budgets, policies, and district leadership
- + Honest, inclusive learning and academic freedom
- + Responses to bullying, harassment, and discrimination
- + Leadership, transparency, and accountability across the district

In this moment, we need leaders who will stand up for dignity, belonging, accountability, and strong public schools where every student can thrive.

**What will you do to help make that a reality?**

# A SSESS YOUR LANDSCAPE

Before you consider running, take time to understand what's happening in your local school district.

Ask yourself:

- + Who is currently serving on your school board?
- + Which school board members are aligned with my values?
- + Which seats are up for election, who votes in them, and when do the elections happen?
- + What issues, policies, or budget decisions are shaping the conversation in your district?
- + How are LGBTQ+ students and families being supported—or harmed—within your district?

Understanding your school board is the first step toward shaping what comes next.



# THINK ABOUT YOUR WHYS

Before deciding to run for school board, you don't need to have all of the answers. You just need to reflect on what is calling you to lead in your community. Your "why" will guide you through your campaign and the responsibilities of public office.

Start with your three whys:

- + Why this? What change do you hope to see in your public schools?
- + Why now? What is compelling you to speak up for students in your community right now?
- + Why you? What experiences, perspectives, and values would you bring to leadership?

Maybe your whys are grounded in:

- + The teachers, mentors, or public schools that helped shape your life
- + Seeing students or families in your community being targeted or excluded
- + A belief that every student deserves to feel safe, valued, and like they belong
- + Wanting students to have access to honest, inclusive education free from censorship and political attacks
- + Your experiences as a parent, student, educator, advocate, or community member

Your whys might come from a personal experience, a moment that stayed with you, or simply a belief that your community deserves better.

**The strongest whys are honest, personal, and rooted in what matters most to you.**

# TAKE ROOT IN YOUR VALUES

Running for school board is about more than winning an election. **It's about how you choose to lead.**

Your values shape how you make decisions, respond to LGBTQ+ and identity-based controversy, and build trust within your community. Values are a foundation you won't compromise on.

For example:

- + Dignity → Every student deserves to feel safe, affirmed, and respected
- + Belonging → Students and families should feel welcomed and able to show up as themselves
- + Opportunity → LGBTQ+ students have the right to live, learn, and thrive openly in school
- + Freedom → Students deserve honest, inclusive education free from censorship and political attacks

Ask yourself:

- + What values will hold up to censorship efforts and divisive attacks on books or curriculum?
- + How do you communicate to the communities you would serve that they can trust you?
- + How do your values shape the vision you have for students in your school district?

**When in doubt, come back to your values.**



# EMBRACE YOUR ROLE

Are you ready to speak up against policies or narratives that harm students and families?

Begin with a commitment to public education, a connection to your community, and a willingness to show up, listen, and lead.

Don't underestimate the power of your conviction. School boards need leaders who care about students, understand their communities, and are willing to lead with integrity, compassion, and courage.

**If you are ready, now is the time to run for what matters. If you care about your public schools and your community, your voice belongs at the table.**

# RUN FOR WHAT MATTERS

Your leadership can have a meaningful impact on your community. Identify where your voice and values are most needed. If your district is facing harmful narratives or policy threats, this might be an important time to run. Is there a realistic path to running a strong, values-based campaign here? Could winning this seat protect and expand inclusion?

As you think about whether running is right for you right now, you also want to begin building relationships and gathering information from your local board of elections:

- + Talk with family, friends, mentors, and other people you trust to guide you on your journey
- + Connect with local leaders and organizations that can support you
- + Learn the campaign timeline and requirements for the election by visiting [your local election administration's website](#)
- + Research previous elections in your district and similar races to better understand the landscape and what your campaign may need to be successful
- + Always stay grounded in your values and your why

You do not need to have all the answers before getting started.

What matters is a willingness to learn, lead, and show up for your community.

Maybe that leader is you.

Your voice belongs at the table.



# STAY CONNECTED AND GET SUPPORT

**We're here to help you take the next steps as you  
Run for What MATTERS!**

Now that you have a better idea of what it means to run for school board, take a moment to reflect if you are ready to run. Consider joining our community of like-minded advocates to receive access to additional support, resources, training and events as you prepare to run for school board yourself or support a local campaign.



**If you're ready to take the next step and learn more, fill out [this](#) interest form or scan the QR code so we can connect with you.**

