

The Three-Minute Comment Structure Card

Closer to a court filing than a TED talk. The job is to enter a single specific item into the official record in a form that survives the meeting.

The four-part time budget (180 seconds total + 20s breath)

20s Locate	Locate <i>"My name is _____. I am a parent of two students at _____. I am here to speak on Item 7.b, the proposed curriculum supplement."</i>
20s Ask	Ask <i>"I am asking the board to delay tonight's vote and refer this item back to the curriculum committee for a public review."</i>
90s Evidence	Evidence <i>One specific story — what happened, when, in which class, to what effect. Your child's experience or one verifiable district data point. Never "many parents feel".</i>
30s Record	Record-able close <i>"If the board approves this tonight without a public review, I want the record to reflect that families were not given a meaningful opportunity to weigh in on a curriculum change reaching my children's classroom in September."</i>

Deliver to the board, not the room

Pick one board member as your focal point. Delivering to one person on the dais reads as composed; scanning the audience reads as performing for the camera.

Verbal vs. Written + Pre-Podium Checklist

If you are speaking, also submit the longer written version before the meeting. They do work neither alone can do.

Verbal comment vs. written submission

VERBAL (3 MINUTES)	WRITTEN (NO CLOCK)
Records position in minutes Establishes you by name and face Gives aligned board members a quote Signals mass if coordinated Won't flip a decided vote Won't get a response from the board	Cites specific packet language Attaches supporting documents Read at home with the staff report Carries the full argument Easier to overlook in the meeting Doesn't put your face in the room

Pre-podium 5-item checklist

- Confirm the item is still on the agenda (boards sometimes amend at the start).
- Confirm the time limit (chair can shorten when many sign up — have a cut version ready).
- Hand your written submission to the clerk before public comment opens.
- Identify the one board member your comment is most directed at.
- Practice aloud with a timer at least twice that day.

What does not work

- Addressing the camera instead of the board (reads as performance).
- Targeting a specific employee instead of a policy (misses the lever).
- Repeating the previous speaker (diminishing returns; coordinate ahead).
- Using all three minutes for outrage with no ask (no action to take).